



## **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP**



## **MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

### **FACULTY OF COMMERCE**

*THE ADEQUACY OF ZIMBABWE'S TERTIARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN ADDRESSING INDUSTRY SKILLS REQUIREMENTS. A CASE OF MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY, GWERU.*

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**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**RELEASE FORM**

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## **DEDICATIONS**

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I dedicate this project to my wife, Loveness, and my two children, Jaden and Janene, who have over the years supported me enthusiastically and encouraged my ambition as I embark on my professional studies journey. Your prayers were not in vain. I also dedicate this to my friends Denis Mumbire and Frank Banda for the encouragement and support when it all looked like there was darkness at the end of the tunnel, you guys brought the light for me to see the bigger picture. To my Chief Executive Officer, Engineer Albert Muyambo (Pr. Eng), you inspired me and told me that even the sky is not the limit. May God richly bless you all.

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## TO GOD BE THE GLORY

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### ABSTRACT

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The research sought to assess the adequacy of Zimbabwe's tertiary education in addressing industry skills requirements using Midlands State University as a case study. The research was premised on the obtaining stakeholder approach to tertiary education. The Midlands State University is guided by its mission to be a stakeholder driven institution of which industry as absorbers of university graduates is a key stakeholder. The research therefore sought to evaluate the extent to which industry expectations are being met by tertiary education. The employed a mixed methods approach although with a strong orientation towards the qualitative methodology. The major data collection tools employed were self administered questionnaires and interviews that were circulated to university lecturers, senior executive from ten parastatals and former Midlands State University students employed in the ten parastatals. The research established that university curriculum is based on international benchmarking, lecturer's own initiative and university policy with minimal industry involvement. Industry involvement and input into university curriculum came through work related learning reports. Findings also suggest that the majority of senior executives believe that university graduates do not add value when employed in organization requiring further training, while lecturers feel that the curriculum is adequate in preparing graduates for industry and arguing that industry was not the only stakeholder. Furthermore it was noted that the participating organizations did have challenges in filling certain position and felt that graduates lacked skills related business acumen and practical appreciation of the business world. The major challenges faced by the university in fulfilling its mandate is mainly related to financial challenges in sustain required university activities. The research recommended a more collaborative and partnership approach to curriculum development and involvement of senior corporate executives in the delivery of teaching so as to allow students a chance to interact with would be employers and also get an appreciation of industry captains expectations.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the setting or background of the study, followed by the research problem at hand. The research problem of the study is followed by the key objectives of the research and the research questions. The chapter also provides a justification and highlight the significance of a study of this nature. Also discussed is the research's conceptual framework, limitations of the study and definition of key terms. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of all the factors considered above.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Zimbabwe for the past decades has been facing severe socio-economic challenges that have threatened the existence of many companies (Ncube and Jerie 2012:2). Kanyenze (2012) observed that the industry is still facing challenges that threaten the survival of most business entities, capacity utilisation remains low in most industries for example in the manufacturing sector where it is estimated to be around 38%. Tertiary institutions while not considered as part of mainstream industry play an integral role in so far as supplying critical human resources with the appropriate repertoire of skills to meet the challenges confronting industry.

According to the Industrial Psychology Consultants (IPC) Report on “What employees look for in Prospective Employees” (2013; 2) there is “an incessant gap between what employees are looking for and what prospective employers have to offer or perceive their potential employees as looking for.” Typically employer's expectations centre around qualification, experience, skills and competencies and it is up to the prospective employee to demonstrate possession of these. Graduates find themselves in a peculiar and unenviable position of no experience. A quick glance at popular recruitment agency Recruitment Matters website ([www.recruitimnetmatters.com](http://www.recruitimnetmatters.com) 18/07/14) demonstrate that experience has become an important

consideration in selection decisions. For instance of the 196 jobs advertised by Recruitment Matters as at 7 August 2014 all required a minimum of 2 years' experience. Equally troubling for the recent graduates is that the IPC (2013;4) recommends that in drafting one's Curriculum Vitae the employment history must appear first implying that it is more important than the qualification. This places the dilemma on graduates of how to gain adequate experience to meet job advert specifications. In other words how can tertiary institution enhance the employability of graduates? Consequently this forces the research to also consider the dimension of the interface between recruitment requirements against recent graduates.

Historically recruitment of employees with managerial and supervisory responsibilities was guided by possession of tertiary qualifications (Menkes 2005; 195). Thus a university acquired academic qualification was an acceptable trade-off in cases of little experience in management. The assumption was that academic success automatically translates into on the job performance. However, later research (Menkes 2005;194) and newer selection methods have showed that academic success is not always synonymous with on-the-job performance, as such recruiters cannot rely on academic success as a predictor of on the job performance. The Education and Employment study by McKinsey (2012) also brought to the fore the mismatch that exists between what tertiary educational systems offer and what employers need and expect. Locally as noted by the IPC 79% of employers base their employment decision on the candidate's relevant experience. In South Africa firms typically rely on a "pipeline strategy" (Business Leadership SA 2006: iii) to fill their vacancies. This is to say they carry out internal recruitment and promotion which effectively shuts out the graduate. This strategy firms feel serves them well in terms of shorter acclimatisation period and improving employee morale. Tertiary institutions as producers of job applicants will therefore find it difficult to break this cycle, it becomes imperative that they must be able to tailor make curricular that addresses these expectations.

The purpose of tertiary education in national development is unchallenged. Tertiary education and its constituent institutions have an immense social and public responsibility in so far as they provide society with a critical mass of citizenry who possess the capability to tackle societal problems (Kurasha 2000:1). Ideally tertiary institutions particularly universities should produce skilled professionals and intellectuals with the necessary repertoire of skills to manage organisational challenges.

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Zimbabwean industries are bedevilled by a myriad of problems that require innovative and unique solutions. According to Mandishona (2013; 3) the most popular selection tool in Zimbabwe is the interview and is primarily used by 72% of employers for the purposes of understanding a candidate's personality. "This is a very interesting static but yet may be a true reflection of industry in general in Zimbabwe at the moment. With many organisations struggling to break-even, employers want employees who are flexible, adaptable and receptive to change. They want employees who are willing and able to do the best of their work with the most minimal of resources and tightest of budget; this calls for innovation and shrewdness on the part of the employee" (IPC 2013: 6). For many business executives the ideal graduate must have a sound appreciation of business solving processes, principles and systems be it in Human Resources, Finance or Operations. However, many decision makers in hiring have reservations on graduates' real experience in business environments (IPC 2013; 9).

The cry for home grown solutions has been gaining momentum; logically institutions of higher learning must champion the growth of local body of knowledge to tackle local problems. In light of increasing business environment turbulence and complexity, new competencies and behaviours for business managers are being demanded. Local universities such as Midlands State Universities (MSU), Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) and Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) amongst a host of many others have responded by offering unique degree programmes in all areas ranging from, Commerce, Arts, Social Sciences, Agriculture, Sciences and Languages. The problems that besiege industry do not seem to subsist as the number of graduates being churned into industry grows. This question which therefore arises is whether these University programmes address industry needs. This is the major question that this research seeks to investigate.

Interesting to note are some views by Chombo (2009) which suggests that academic qualifications do not seem to be dove-tailed to organisational expectations. They are therefore viewed as utopian and theoretical with little practical relevance. In other words universities, being academic institutions, suffer from selective homogeneity (2001; 254) that is, producing graduates who fit more into the university (academic) system than industry. Chombo (2009) further contends that university curriculum is too theoretical, arguing that curriculum should be informed by the need to identify knowledge and skills gaps in industry and commerce and also communicates in order to come up with relevant, development-oriented programmes appropriate in addressing the challenges we face today.

As a nation Zimbabwe has always taken pride in its education system at independence in 1980 the government adopted a deliberate policy of “Education for all” whose first main goal was political, that is, to address the issue of inequality of educational opportunities. Secondly and more relevant to this study the policy was aimed at addressing the manpower needs of the country, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education was therefore created to address the critical skills shortage experienced in many economic sectors of the country (Kurasha 2000; 1). Regrettably as noted by Chombo *ibid*, what has happened in local universities is the commercialisation of tertiary education. There are a variety of post-graduate programmes known by different names but the content is the same. A careful analysis of degree programmes (in particular MBA and Masters in Commerce) in the universities reflects massive duplication of programmes hence no skills variety.

At the height of economic crisis between 2007-2008, Zimbabwe lost a number of its skilled workforce to the diaspora leaving a void that was hoped to be filled by the graduates of state universities. Five years into the multicurrency regime skills shortage still remains a serious threat. The problems facing organisations are huge and in need of fresh and innovative ideas. While universities continue to release graduates there is no corresponding evidence that the graduates being channelled into industry are of the right calibre to match the industrial expectations.

The problem of skills gap in the industry is an international challenge, as evidenced by the Growth and Talent Shortage Survey, by Forbes Magazine (2012) which showed that 49% of employers have difficulties in filling vacancies. This is not because there are no active job seekers on the market, but because job seekers do not possess the requisite skills.

This mismatch between how educators and employers see college graduates' preparedness provides insight into one source of problem (Forbes 2012; 2). For example McKinsey International as cited by Forbes Magazine (2012) suggests that while 72% of educational institutions believe recent graduates are ready for work, only 14% of employees agree. The question that therefore stands out is, do academic institutions adequately prepare graduates for the challenges of industry? An argument may also be made that part of the problem may be that tertiary institutions are not meant to cope with fast-changing industry needs where skills depreciate quickly. As such industries argument that their operating environment is characterised by constant change tertiary bodies should therefore focus on curriculum to match the pace of change. Harshly put it can be asked whether universities are preparing graduates for today's jobs or does their curriculum reflect jobs of years gone by. According to McKinsey cited by Forbes Magazine (2012), 50% of today's jobs did not exist 25 years ago.

From the above it is unclear whether the problem lies with the universities curricular and misalignment between universities curricular with industry expectations. This research therefore seeks to bring clarity to this. Through its mission the Midlands State University wishes to be a stakeholder driven university thus this research aims to assess the extent to which this has been achieved.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Zimbabwe pride itself as a nation that value education and is rated the best in Africa. Key issues however have been raised on whether the very education adds value to industry and society at large looking at an array of challenges bedevilling the economy. This is so in light



of the IPC Talent Surveys and their Report on What Employers look for in Prospective Employees. Admittedly both researches reveal an interesting gap on what industry needs and what they get from universities. This has resulted in the call to broaden and expand the courses currently being offered by Universities. In 1999, the Nziramasanga Commission noted that, Zimbabwe's curriculum was designed to train employees rather than employers/entrepreneurs". This has however sparked controversy on the quality of university education. Efforts are being made by the government to channel resources towards tertiary education but industry is lamenting over the failure by universities to produce switched on graduates, which therefore is now raising the question whether there is a mismatch between the university curricula and industry expectations. This cannot just go unnoticed; as such this provoked the researcher to investigate this challenge.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This research therefore investigates the problem of an inadequate university curriculum in so far as industry needs are concerned. In other words the study looks into the problem of misalignment between university programmes and industry skills needs.

1. To assess how the university curriculum is designed and developed.
2. To determine how the curriculum address industry expectation given current economic outlook.
3. To assess the interface between recruitment requirements and university graduate qualifications.
4. To determine how industry perceive the contribution and value of university graduates.
5. Assess the challenges faced by Midlands State University in balancing its curriculum and industry expectations.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question is whether the curriculum offered at the Midlands State University is addressing industry's skills needs and expectation of graduates?

However, the research also has the following sub-questions

1. How is university curriculum designed and developed at MSU?
2. How does university curriculum address industry expectation in this current economic outlook?
3. What is the nature of the interface between recruitment requirements and university graduate qualifications?
4. How does industry perceive the contribution and value of university graduates?
5. What challenges does Midlands State University face in balancing its curriculum and industry expectations?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

### **Significance of Theory**

Previous studies and research in the field of human resources development have yielded mixed reactions from both policy makers and implementers. More importantly, rarely has a critical study into the need for alignment between tertiary education and industry skills demand been done. The research is also of great significance in so far as I provide an evaluation platform in the progress of Midlands State University as an emerging tertiary institution of choice, which is stakeholder, driven.

### **Significance of Professional Practice**

The research may also help improve the country's tertiary education system as the backbone of social and economic progress. Industry relies on graduates to solve challenges in the operating environment thus a constant and regular reality check on the nature of alignment between tertiary curriculum and industry dynamics is of utmost importance. The study is significant in so far as it helps to contribute to a new body of literature that seeks to bridge the gap between classroom learning and practise. Generally local evaluative research of this nature is very much still unexplored. The research also intends to provide significant contribution to the professional practise of university graduates by highlighting key competency expectations that are required of them by the industry captains.

## **Significance to the Researcher**

To the researcher the study is of significance in terms of adding to his own knowledge base and also helps the researcher gain a more insight understanding of how tertiary institutions interface with the publics.

### **1.7 ASSUMPTIONS**

In this study the researcher assumed that, in its original intent the university sought to achieve a link between its products (undergraduate students) and customer needs (industry skills requirement)

It is also assumed that

- Information will be accessible and responsible people will be knowledgeable,
- Information to be given by respondents will be accurate and respondent will also be keen to participate in the research.
- The researcher assumed that there is political will to institute recommendations where appropriate.

### **1.8 DELIMITATION**

The study investigates the mismatch or match between industry expectations of MSU graduates and what these graduates are exposed to in terms of their curriculum. The study does not therefore seek to assess the importance of the discipline or the value of selected departments, mainly HR, Marketing, Accounting and Business Management. The study merely assesses whether organizational expectations upon these graduates are met but not necessarily their value to their organizations. A 10% of Zimbabwe's parastatals will be used namely, Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission, National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB), Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED), Net One, National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM)

The above parastatals were selected purposively using the expert sampling procedure. According to Ghauri (2002) and Stake (1994) in Ghauri picking of the participants is based on the belief that their participation is expected to advance the understanding of the research phenomenon. According to Cooper (1984) the selection should be based on criteria that are consistent with the research problem, in this research the focus is on employers' expectations on graduates hence the parastatal were purposively chosen for their skills variety, impact on the economic development of the nation as well as the sheer numbers they employ. According to Yin (1993) the purposive selection of varied participation is important in research as it allows the researcher to explore multiple practices, describe the diversity of practice and explain the critical mediating factors.

Equally important is the choice of these parastatals that Ghauri (2002) argument that gaining research access to large organizations is often difficult if one does not enjoy personal contacts with key decision makers in such organizations. The researcher enjoys such contacts and will use them to gain research access.

### **Geographic Demarcation**

Data will be collected from Lectures and students (both past and present) of the selected departments of Midlands State University. The organizations that will be used to represent industry are those from Harare and Gweru these organizations will also be selected on the basis that they employ a significant number of graduates of the MSU undergraduate programmes. Response will be sought from both students who are practitioners and executives who supervise them and determine the expectations.

### **Time Span**

The researcher shall focus on the dollarized period that is from February 2009 to July 2014. The specified timeline is chosen mainly because the period preceding it is generally considered a lost decade and employment practices were more radical and haphazard.

## **1,9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The researcher will be theoretically be guided by Edward Freeman (1984)'s Stakeholder Theory which also looks at the relationships between an organization and others in the internal and external environment. It also looks at how these relationships affect the organization and conducts its activities. It underlines that a stakeholder is a person or organization that can affect or be affected by your organization. Stakeholders can come from inside or outside of the organization. Examples of stakeholders of an organization include customers, employees, stakeholders, suppliers, non-profit community organizations, government, and the local community among many others.

The core idea of stakeholder theory is that organizations that manage their stakeholder relationship effectively will survive longer and perform better than those organizations that don't. Freeman suggests that organizations should develop certain stakeholder competencies. These include the following:

1. Making a commitment to monitor stakeholder interests
2. Developing strategies to effectively deal with stakeholder and their interests.
3. Dividing and categorizing interests into manageable segments
4. Trying to ensure that organizational functions addresses the needs of stakeholders

The above key factors will be effectively applied in determining the significance of including industry expectations in designing the curriculum.

The research theoretically uses a model based on the research by Montanini (2003; 3) and Bloom and Canning (2009; 2) as well as the remarks by Minister Chombo, a framework for this kind of study has to be grounded in this kind of theory. The stakeholder theory within this context asserts that all stakeholders not only owners (government) and lectures, but also students and organizations that receive these graduates are sufficiently affected by university

actions to deserve the right to be considered in the corporate decision making (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Within the context of this study, then a university is best viewed as a coalition of stakeholder interest's chief among them being the organization that receives its products. These organizations are collectively referred to as industry.

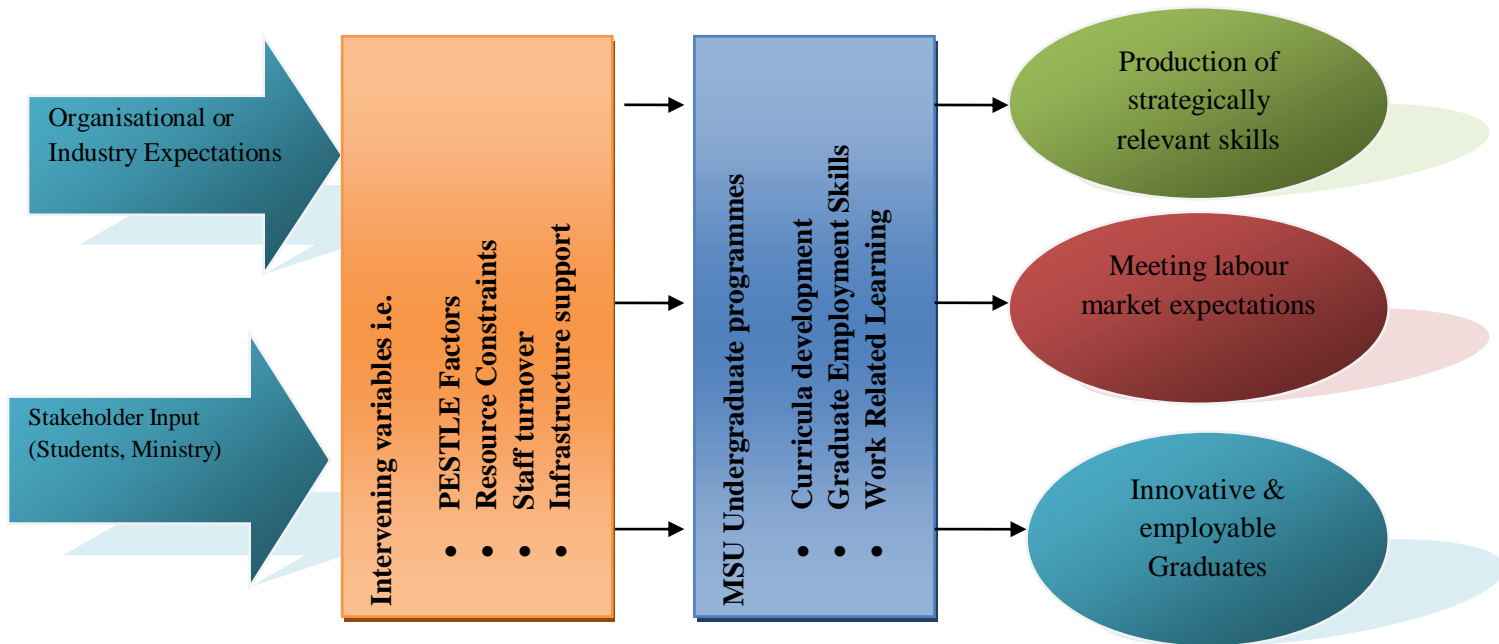


Fig.1 : Model of University-stakeholder interaction

Admittedly industry performance is not solely dependent on input from educational institutions. Other important considerations in industry performance are as shown in the diagram below.



Fig. 2. Factors affecting Industry Performance

## 1.10 LIMITATIONS

The following are anticipated limitations to the research:-

- ❖ Some of the research participants are senior executives whose schedule made it difficult to have adequate time with the for research purposes.
- ❖ An attempt to make prior arrangements so that the research is scheduled into the diaries of these executives was however, made to mitigate the limitation.
- ❖ The researcher mitigated against time constraints by seeking study leave from his employer to devote more time to the research project.

## 1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- *Tertiary Education* – according to the World Bank it is broadly referred to all post-secondary education, including but not limited to universities. Universities are clearly a key part of all tertiary systems, but the diverse and growing set of public and private tertiary institutions in every country – colleges, technical training institutes, community colleges, nursing schools, research laboratories, centers of excellence, distance learning centers, and many more – forms a network of institutions that support the productions of the higher-order capacity necessary for development.
- *Tertiary institution* – institutions that provide tertiary education e.g. a university
- *Skills gap* – according to the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) it is a significant gap between an organizations current capability and the skills it needs to achieve its goals. It is the point at which an organization can no longer grow or remain competitive because it cannot fill critical jobs with employees who have the right knowledge, skill and abilities.
- *Employability* – the Higher Education Academy defines it as *a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy*

### **1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter has provided the setting of the research in the background of the study, which also informed the research problem, namely are tertiary institutions addressing skills needs. The chapter also looked at the research objectives, questions and the significance of the study. The chapter ended by looking at conceptual framework as well as the scope of the research.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher is carrying a critical review of literature on skills gap, curriculum development and tertiary education is undertaken. Firstly skills gap and tertiary education is defined and their role in an economy is analyzed using various authors' arguments. An analysis and overview of the tertiary education of the country is also carried out. The chapter also tries to locate the study in the context of existing literature and identifies the current gap in literature the study seeks to fill. The chapter will utilize material from different studies that have been done by various scholars around the world. It will utilize text books, presentations, newspaper and all internet sources.

#### **2.2 Meaning and Nature of skills gap in Zimbabwe**

Yoliswa (2012) argues that as Africa's growth is becoming noticeable a new and subtle challenge begins to lurk in the shadows. She argues that lack of adequate funding of education institutions in Africa is putting a strain in the ability of the continent to produce the quality of graduates needed to meet the growing business needs. According to the PriceWaterHouse and Coopers (PWC) survey 75% of CEOs operating in Africa identified a lack of available talent as a threat to their growth. Consequently most have had to rely on expatriates in key positions, the lack of both management and technical skills is thus a barrier to do business in Africa. The discussion about the skills challenge in Africa becomes even more important considering that Ernst and Young forecasts an invest of US\$150 billion by 2015 creating 350 000 capital intensive jobs a year, thus failure to produce the requisite skills can only be fatal to Africa's business growth agenda.

While the case for skills development is both theoretically and intellectual compelling the basic starting point in this research perhaps is what is skills gap and does Zimbabwe have one?

According to the Mambo (2010:ix) the basic premise of the concept of skills is *the ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and/or people (interpersonal skills).*

Given the current turbulence and complexity which defines the operating environment, the KPMG recognizes the Stephen Covey (2012) argument that today's problems cannot be solved at same level we were when we created them. Thus according to KPMG skills required to succeed tomorrow are not necessarily the same as those required to succeed today. Tertiary education must therefore be proactive in its curriculum development and planning.

According to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCEs 2015:5) *“skills gaps are self-defined by employers when they perceive that an employee lacks certain skills preventing them from being fully proficient in the job role to a higher standard”*

Essentially value is defined more by the receiver than the giver, thus employers are the receivers of graduates and the ones who define what skills deficiencies exist and what constitutes a skills gap. By extension tertiary institutions thus must bow to the demands of the employees according to this line of thought. However, the question that is open to debate is who defines what is quality, the producer or the consumer? Furthermore does industry and tertiary education have the same definition of what constitutes suitability for employment, these are the key question that are currently missing in existing research and this study seek to answer them.

The UK Commission on Employment and Skills (2013) again notes that skills gap or deficiencies can occur at various levels namely at individual, departmental, organizational and or national level at any time because either organizational personnel and or the labor (from the commission's report it can be said that skills are not essential but would enable a

task to be completed more quickly or efficiently) due to changes in the operating environment.

A skills gap therefore is a perceived mismatch between the skills required by employers to fill a particular vacancy and what the job applicant possesses.

Zimbabwe, like many other developing companies, has had its fair share of skills fight. The problem of brain drain was one of the most defining features of the hyperinflation period in Zimbabwe. Unlike other leading nations like India which have turned brain drain into brain gain through remittances, Zimbabwe still experiences shortages in critical areas and an attempt for home remittances such as Homelink has failed to realize any benefits from skills abroad.

Before any discussion about skills challenges in Zimbabwe, it is important to distinguish between skills gap, skills shortage and latent skills shortage. Skills gap refers to skill deficiencies of employees, internal to a firm, hence working within the workplace. According to the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) it is a significant gap between an organization's current capabilities and the skills it needs to achieve its goals. It is the point at which an organization can no longer grow or remain competitive because it cannot fill critical vacancies with employees who have the right knowledge, skills and abilities.

Skills shortages are defined as “a shortage of suitably skilled people available in the labor market” (Skills Insight annual Skills Review, 2001). For example the situation currently obtaining in the Ministry of Public Works where there is an approved budget of 38 architects but only one post is filled because architects are hard to come by in the market.

According to Mayhew (2003) the most problematic challenge lies with latent skills shortages. These are unrecognized skilled gaps because the organization concerned has adopted to cope

without the necessary skills (and potentially trapped itself in low skills equilibrium). For example certain state owned enterprises have managed to cope without certain personnel and built a mirage that they have no need for those personnel. Some have argued that the phrase skills gap is misused, as for a gap to exist there has to be mismatch between two things.

Within the world of business it is also important to note that skills can either be generic or specific skills. General skills are those that are of value to everyone and it could there be argued that their provisions should be funded by the state. Specific skills are of value to specific organizations in particular context and it could be argued that their provisions should be funded by specific organizations. Transferable skills are of value to multiple employers and therefore make the employee more valuable. For this reason it could be argued that individual should fund the provision of these skills.

According to Chikanda (2009) skilled personnel have left Zimbabwe at a faster rate than training institutions are able to replenish them, to make matters worse lecturers were among those that left the country to the extent some universities failed to open in 2008. In response, the Zimbabwean government has attempted to encourage training facilities to increase enrolment, with many institution introducing parallel degree programs as well as block release programs. Today they are more 15 universities in Zimbabwe of which 9 are state owned. Under recent government measures, most training facilities lack the financial resources to increase enrolment or to adequately recruit and retain professors and tutors. In some cases, budgetary cuts have forced training facilities, such as the MSU for the second semester in 2008 and the University of Zimbabwe's college of Health and Sciences, to temporarily shut down.

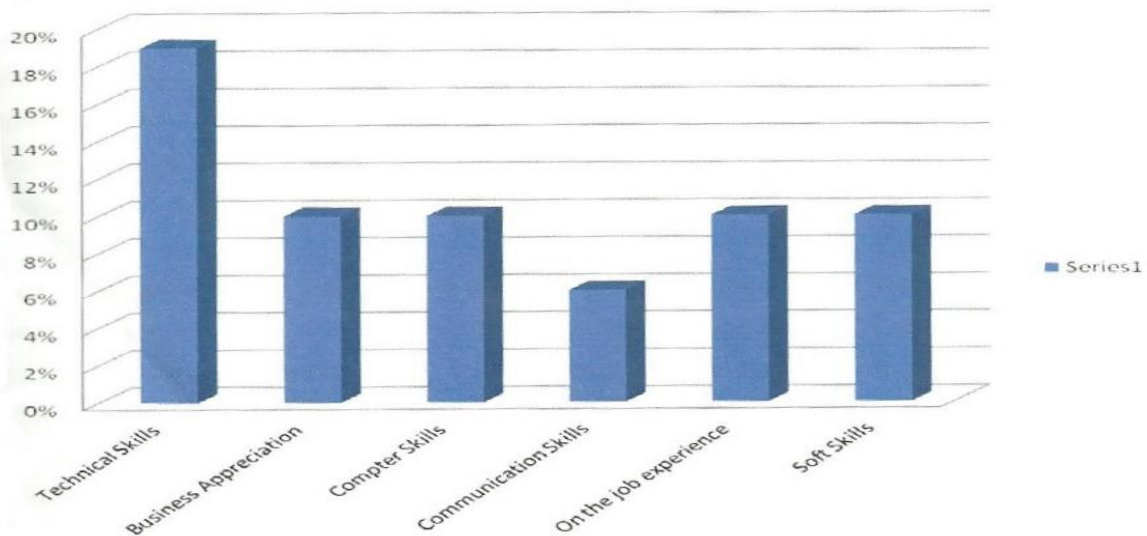
This led to an unprecedented flight of qualified and skilled professionals from both the private and public sectors thus creating a vicious circle never seen in the history of the country. As a result, service delivery in the country was adversely affected.

According to Mbizvo (2012) to establish the extent of this malaise, a number of studies were carried out by the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education in collaboration with international development partners such as the IOM, UNESCO, and UNDP. These studies include the SIRDC Study (2003), the Nepachem Survey (2006) and the MHTE Baseline Study of 2009 (Mbizvo 2012). Key findings of these findings in relation to the public sector showed that:

- To The Health Service Board (HSB) the vacancy rate for Doctors in Zimbabwe as of April 2010 was 49% translating to 3 doctors per 14 000 people against the World Health Organization's standard of 2.5 doctors per 1 000 people.
- From 2005 to 2010, Zimbabwe was training between 2, 500 and 3, 000 teachers per year in a population of 14 million people. Other countries within the region were training far below their manpower requirements and in 2006 South Africa attracted an estimated 20,000 teachers, the majority of whom were mathematics and science specialists. By 2010, the progressive Teachers Union reported that we had lost a total of 45, 000 teachers.

While not specific to Zimbabwe the poor state of tertiary education is noted by MacKinnon and MacLaren (2002), who noted that in some sub-Saharan countries such as South Sudan nearly 10 percent of graduates are considered unsafe practitioners.

With regards to the private sector Nguwi (2012) noted a worrisome trend in terms of the quality of graduates' viz-a-viz industry expectations. Nguwi (2012) found that most graduates lack the critical skills that industry expects of such as business appreciation, problem solving and entrepreneurial ability. From this research it's quite clear that 56% of employers find it difficult to fill particular vacancies with the right people. Furthermore the same research detailed the key skills that employers found lacking in graduates as follows:



*Fig. 3: Skills that employers find lacking in job candidates (IPC Talent Shortage Survey 2012)*

African economic think tank African Economic Outlook (AEO) while acknowledging that education is not the only bottleneck to graduate employment, accepts that it is a major one. Further to that the AEO is of the opinions that consider lack of education and skills mismatches to be principal obstacles for young people (mostly graduates) in labor markets in about half the countries it surveyed.

In the case of Zimbabwe it can be argued that the existence and growth of recruitment agencies in Zimbabwe signifies a large number of vacancies in organizations, despite the high unemployment and influx of graduates. It is therefore synonymous with the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011) conclusion that high vacancy rates in the presence of large scale unemployment confirm the existence of skills mismatches. In theory it can therefore be argued that what tertiary bodies are not what the consumer – employers – wants. While local statistics are unavailable to support the line of argument, the trend can be seen in SADC region through where in South Africa there are 600 000 unemployed university graduates against 800 000 vacancies (The Economist 2012b)

While it is not a case of complete skills absence, it has become apparent that skills that the labor market particularly the recent graduate possess are redundant and of little value to employers. While not specific to Zimbabwe (where not prior research has been done on this subject) the AEO country Experts Survey of 2012 reaches a telling conclusion concerning the status of tertiary education that is, *“Skills mismatches point up a poor quality of education and the absence of linkages between education systems and employers as underlying problems. The recruitment and temporary work agencies surveyed reported a general lack of targeted education and frequent major discrepancies between candidates’ profiles and the skills required for a job...”* page 37

Locally parastatals have awakened from their deep slumber and archaic recruitment procedure that a university degree was adequate for employment regardless of specific set of specific set of skills. Thus according to Madhuku (2012) it is uncommon to find a psychology graduate without background of labour law and relations working under the Ministry of Labor as a Labour Officer. The AEO posits that tertiary institutions in Africa often educated for the public sector and while it served them well, most, most parastatals have been commercialized and universities still churn out graduates without acknowledging such changes. Furthermore the private sector was perhaps neglected by universities. The alleged rigidity of universities and reluctance to evolve has led to some (AEO 2012) to suggest that African universities do not educate for African needs.

The skills gap challenge facing Zimbabwe employers and in Africa in general is best summed up by General Seegers, Director of Human Resources Service at PWC Southern Africa, who says: *“The gap between the skills of the current workforce and the skills business need to achieve their growth plans is widening. Despite rising business confidence equating to more jobs, organizations are struggling to find the right people to fill these positions.”*

### **2.3 The role of Tertiary Institutions (Universities)**

According to the International Institute of Education (IIE: 2007). Universities play a critical role in generating new ideas, and in accumulating and transmitting knowledge, yet they have

remained peripheral to development concerns. While local industry is now coming out of the doldrums of the economic malaise of the preceding decade, a number of local universities have emerged to fill the country's skills base which is now resident in the diaspora. Despite the existence of more than 12v universities in Zimbabwe, IPC 2012 report on talent Shortage Survey reveals that 46.2% of organizations in the 19 industries sampled experienced challenges in finding the right people to fill vacancies.

Admittedly universities are not the sole generators of knowledge and graduates needed for development, however, through their research and teaching they help to produce expertise, manage development, engineer social transformation, this consequently suggests that universities are at the forefront of skills development and should therefore design and curriculum than enhances and harness development (IIE 2007:5). In other words as noted by Mbizvo (2012) Tertiary Education has been quick to acknowledge universities while central in a democratic and progressive society their primary focus in Zimbabwe has been to churn out competent graduates in light of the skills flight and bedeviled the country between 2004 and 2009.

According to renowned economist, Xavier (1990) who argues that the main determinant of poverty today is neither lack of natural resources nor geographical marginality, but rather lack of appropriate human capital to provide value, make use of technology and attract investment.

The skills base of a country and the speed with which skills can adjust to meet new requirements is as important in determining future economic success as natural resources and the financial capital base (Mbizvo 2012). Industry as social driver of social progress relies on relies on institutions of higher learning for the provision of adequately trained graduates to meet its challenges head on. Investment in learning institutions has already brought structured success to industries in emerging industrial giants such as Korea (Mbizvo 2012).



Harrison and Hantington (2000) also suggest that tertiary institutions, more often than not from the spine a country's information infrastructure, in their role as "banks" and conduits of information (through libraries and the like). Furthermore, they argue that through tertiary education graduates acquire norms, values and attitudes that form the foundation of the "social capital" imperative for constructing healthy civil societies and cohesive cultures. This arguments remains central to the development of industry appropriate curriculums that help graduates enter industry well prepared.

A close analysis of the above indicates two important gaps in existing research. Firstly there is an absence of a local body research on the mandate or role of universities in a developing society such as Zimbabwe with its unique challenges. Secondly there is little reference to how industry and universities interface, which gap this research aims to close.

Stern, Porter, and Furman (2008) are of the view that universities are the major drivers of basic and applied research. Recent studies on research in universities show that in the development of national innovative capacity, "countries that have located a higher share of their research and development activity in the educational sector have been able to achieve significantly higher productivity". This argument by Stern at al (2008) is another confirmation of the paramount importance of universities as drivers of national development and growth. Clearly from the proceeding argument tertiary institutions roles go beyond skills acquisition in preparation for the world of work. The role of universities it seems also includes personal development and general social development. However, this study focuses solely on the role of universities in addressing industry skills requirements.

The United Information Service (UNIS: 2000) suggests that a university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Critically the UNIS is of the opinion that if resourced universities may take the leading role in developing "African expertise" this is to say universities can improve the analysis of African challenges and capacitate local institutions (such as industry)

## **2.4 University Curriculum Development**

According to Harris and Hantington (2010) higher Education Institutions should understand their own offerings and how these are perceived in the market, because it could have important marketing and management implications. Various factors influence the choice of potential scholars to study at a specific tertiary institution, including location, reputation of academic quality, course specifics, and career opportunities (Ford, Joseph, & Joseph, 1999; Krone, Gilly, Zeithaml and Lamb, 1981) The Nziramasanga Commission (1999) in the case of Zimbabwe provides an eye opener. The commission recommended an outcome-based curriculum, which is broad based in terms of subjects offered, and which focuses on learning areas, employment related skills and other essential skills to be developed across the curriculum. It was set up by the Government or Act of Parliament to look into the education system and make recommendations for any for any curriculum changes required. Unfortunately it was shelved and it was implemented in 2013 after the presidential election through the setting up of the psychomotor ministry.

Interestingly Munzvembiri (2014) suggests that the university school curriculum is an issue of core importance and needs to be looked at. Existing courses needs to be reviewed, new courses recommended and approved and the overall efficacy of courses needs to be periodically re-evaluated to ensure the skills being taught, are aligned to the requirements in industry. He went on to suggest that schools continue to use a curriculum that was last comprehensively reviewed in the 1980s, and this is something that need to be addressed on a broader level. He suggests that that as the world progresses, we cannot afford for students who attend local universities to be disadvantaged as a result of the acquiring outmoded skills because of an obsolete curriculum. Policy hence needs to be directed at creating a level playing field between local students and those who graduate from foreign institutions through embracing a modern and comprehensive curriculum. The university used as a case study The Midlands State University (MSU) mission is to be a stakeholder driven institution. By extension its graduates are absorbed into industry thus industry is an important stakeholder for the university.

## **Researches carried out in Zimbabwe and Europe on Tertiary Education**

According to Nguwi (2013) 56.50% of his responding organizations recruited graduates in 2013 and of these 82.2% recruited more than 50 while 17.4% recruited less than 50 people. These statistics only serve to underline the importance of industry as a significant recipient of university service. Thus it is important to understand how university curriculum is developed in relation to the expectations of its major stakeholders. According to the Commission of European Communities (2006), higher and tertiary education around the world is witnessing the significant shift in its expectations to help address immediate and longer-term sustainable development challenges. The development of its curriculum therefore becomes central part of the process by which universities are able to meet their expectations. Sekkula-Leinoetal (2010) suggests that curriculum must be able to reflect both traditional principles and contemporary issues about a field. Within the Zimbabwean industries setting the move in recruitment exercises is toward innovative and enterprising graduates (Nguwi 2013) such an expectation resonates well with the Midlands State University's vision *to be a unique development oriented, pace-setting and stakeholder driven University that produces innovative and enterprising-graduates.*

A stakeholder approach to curriculum development would in theory imply a consultation framework where university departments liaise with key stakeholders in the development of appropriate curriculum. Universities such as Midlands State University have unique programs such as the Work-related learning period which is intended to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Theoretically students' reports and their industry supervisors' reports are ideal routes to elicit stakeholder input on a theoretical basis and the study will provide the practical ways in which curriculum is developed.

In neighboring countries such as South Africa curriculum development has been shaped by benchmarking against other leading universities. Locally while there is no research on can base their argument for benchmarking curriculum, a close analysis of program content for alike programs across universities reveals a conformance approach, this points to benchmarking. According to Fitz and Bendell (1993.23) benchmarking refers to the continuous process of measuring products, services and practices against leading competitors.

In other word benchmarking is synonymous with a research for best practice. Thus for example the department of Accounting at Chinhoyi University would simply benchmark its program content against that of MSU or other leading university.

Roffe, (2010) suggest since universities have become big business there is now stiffer competition in terms of the way their programs are designed and named so as to attract more students. As a result of the competitive intensity or rivalry amongst universities Roffe (2010) argues that the curriculum development cycles in tertiary institutions have in general become shorter. The situation is further compounded by the ever-changing business environment which results in ever-changing industry and government expectations.

Historically education curriculum was value laden to reflect state ideology, thus curriculum was imposed on universities and colleges by the state. Such examples include the teaching National Strategic Studies at Polytechnic colleges and gender studies and universities. This is supported by Bishop (1985) who contends that education can be value free and different value systems or value ideologies generate different curricula. Thus industry may become subservient to the state's ideological expectations.

Just like most organizational and institutional processes curriculum development is a key innovative process among students and can aid the economy. This therefore places a lot of meaning on how tertiary institutions develop their curriculum. Creating and developing a curriculum though, is a process common to all disciplines. It is often described as a cyclic process according to Argyris, (1991) comprising of four stages:

- ✓ The identification of needs
  
- ✓ The design of a course of study
  
- ✓ Delivery of the learning programme

- ✓ The evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the initial objectives.

While curriculum development may not be a sequential process the above stages are central to any curriculum development exercise and are generally accepted across all educational institutions.

### **Early Indicators for Trends to Come in Higher Education**

Naisbitt's (1982) bestseller, *Megatrends*, alerted common citizens to the most significant trends transforming society. He pointed out that the United States had moved from an industrial society to one based on the creation and distribution of knowledge. Through the trends identified were not directed at educational institutions, most of them are relevant.

- Movement from an industrially -based society to a knowledge based society, and from a national economy to a world economy, called for more knowledgeable citizenry of lifelong learners skilled at functioning in a diverse society.
- Transformation from forced technology to a high technology, high touch existence foreshadowed the role that technology would come to play in the delivery of education and the way people learn and work.
- Greater numbers of individuals would need skills in leading and collaborating in order to adapt to the change from a centralized to a decentralized society in which organizations would be structured around networks rather than hierarchies.
- We needed a citizenry composed of critical thinkers who were responsible for their own learning in order to transits from short to long term thinking, from either/or decisions to multiple choices, and from a representative democracy to a more participatory democracy.

*(Source: Naisbitt 1982)*

Friedman (2005) also speaks to the need of the U.S to better teach students “how to learn’ so that they can readily adapt their knowledge and skills to the rapidly changing challenges and

opportunities. He identifies three areas of globalization with different drivers of integration: from 192-1800, nations increased globalization; from, companies led the way; since 2000 individuals have the newfound power to collaborate and complete globally. This means that individuals need to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities made available through technology. He further points to the fact that first two eras were dominated by Western, but that this era will increasingly be dominated by non-Western and non-white cultures, resulting in “*every color of the human rainbow taking part*’ (p. 12).

Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988), suggests that real improvement in higher education is a democratic process through which shared goals are explicitly established, progress is measured, and work to improve performance is motivated and guided. It further suggests that it will include agreement on fundamental priorities and an effective, practical division of labor; it will focus on a few critical goals at every level of responsibility; and it will involve rigorous measurement and public reporting of results, followed by collaborative work to improve.

Stephen Covey, a key contributor to the adult education market, authored the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1990) that sold over ten million copies. The book stresses balance in personal and professional effectiveness that can be achieved through a “paradigm shift,” a change in perception about how the world works. Covey features perceptions and behavior regarding productivity, time management, positive thinking, developing “proactive muscles” by acting with initiative rather than reacting, and more.

In this book, *The Fifth Discipline* (1994), Peter Senge characterized organizations as learning entities. He identified five disciplines requisite for all employees: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Senge states, “These might just as well be called the *leadership disciplines* as the learning disciplines. Those who excel in these distinctions of being the “fifth discipline” since it serves to make the results of the other disciplines work together for the benefit of business.

W. Edward Deming, once shunned in the United States, whose quality management principles transformed Japanese management. Most of the practices promoted by his 14 points required critical thinking skills, inspection of product quality, reflecting and analysis, problem identification and design of solutions, a focus on quality rather than quantity, measurement of effectiveness, and the cultivation of environments that promoted risk-taking. He also recommended that people learn to solve problems cooperatively rather than competitively.

Given the focus of this research, it is important to consider the role of industry in the design of university curriculum. According to Lemmer and Badenhost (1997) satirically suggests that like parents, employers have also an input in curriculum development because they know the curriculum that is marketable in the world of work. However, we must also consider that the general trend across the globe is in inclination towards a knowledge based economy thus it maybe more suitable to have curriculum designed by educational theorists rather than practitioners. This argument is of importance considering that it is the theorists who can best explain theoretical needs and practical needs in curriculum development.

The problems facing Zimbabwean industry are unique to Zimbabwe, thus there is more value to have a curriculum development to focus on local industry. It is however, important to note that the world is becoming a global village hence Law, (2010) argues for a curriculum that is designed with the needs of the global village in mind. This calls for the question that should local universities such as the MSU sacrifice local industry expectations for the sake of producing a globally competitive graduate. While the need to have universities that address local skills gap is important it is also important to note that the Zimbabwean graduate is also part of the global village and must be competitive in that regard hence curriculum must also have a global thrusts as well.

The above views are further supported by Blackmore (2002) who also suggests that globalization has provided a rationale for restructuring the Higher Education systems worldwide, mainly to meet the need for a workforce that is equipped with not only the traditional discipline knowledge and skills, but also a broad range of generic capabilities.

Peters (2004) further contents that the restructuring has in fact resulted in a shift that emphasizes the idea that equips the students with “operational competence” across national boundaries and a trend that favors the discourses about privatization, marketization, commodification, managerialism and performativity, a situation that results in the balance between curriculum and the quality of students to be promoted.

## **2.5 Recruitment and selection criteria and plight of the recent graduate**

A key question that graduates often grapple with is their employability after college. Employability is defined by the Higher Education academy of UK as “*a set of achievements – skills, understandings personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy*”. P2

For many years employers have taken the view that the recruitment of managerial staff should be guided by possession of requisite experience and qualifications (Menkes 2005). Locally in Zimbabwe the interface between graduates and recruitment criteria has been reported on by Nguwi (2012) who found out that when short-listing candidates employers typically rely on Curriculum Vitae’s, he (Nguwi 2012) further noted that 72% of the employers said they look at the candidate’s qualification. However, a contrasting finding was noted in the IPC Report on What Employers Look for showed that qualification was not the sole consideration as, 79% said they look at the candidate’s experience – relevant experience (IPC 2012). Consequently the common notion is that recent graduates are green horns and lack the necessary toughness to face today’s current challenges. Typically Recruitment Matters emphasizes the possession of professional qualification such as IPMZ for HR graduates, CIS for Accounting graduates and or IOBZ for banking and graduates, however, no research has been done authoritatively conclude whether possession of professional qualification is an acceptable trade-off with experience.

According to Porter (1985) the new industry reality is that it looks for adaptability, innovation and problem solving techniques in new recruits. The local industry has been



described as being in fire-fighting mode thus employers are looking for graduates who are inquisitive, innovative, logical, critical, creative, and able to think laterally and conceptualize issues. Graduates who came from institutions that are perceived as equipping their graduates with these qualities tend to be preferred over others (Nguwi 2012)

The period of hyperinflation did much change to Zimbabwe education system. In 2008 children in primary and secondary school were reported to have learnt for no more than 90 days over the whole year. The tertiary education sector was not spared by the incessant industrial action by the tutors. For some time the IPC noted that this resulted in reduced credibility of the Zimbabwean education system and the resultant qualification. This may be proved by the increase in number of children sitting for Cambridge International Examinations and also the number of Zimbabweans attending universities outside the country. As part of their Survey, they undertook to understand the job-market benefit of education outside Zimbabwe and also if employers preferred any local tertiary learning institution over another. Respondents were asked if they had any preferences over locally trained, regionally trained or internationally trained graduates, a slim majority of the respondents (52%) said they preferred locally trained graduates. 7% said they preferred South African trained graduates and 41% said they had no preferences. This is stark contrast to a similar survey undertaken by Gallup where European organizations were seen as having a high value on international mobility. For example, 32% of employers with more than 50% of “international” day-to-day operations strongly agreed or rather agreed that it is very important that new recruits had studied abroad. Only 17% of the respondents to that Survey said there had no preferences.

In recruitment the major selection methods are still interviews despite their well-documented shortcomings and biases. According to the IPC most hiring managers tend to favor graduates who went to same university as them this is called selective homogeneity (Price 2004). Universities, it must be remembered are also recruiting organizations and have been accused of homogeneity that is producing graduates who are academics and thus fit more into the academics side rather than practical side. However, graduates find it difficult to enter

employment because some of the recruiting requirement emphasize past experience which may be absent on the part of the graduate.

## **2.6 Challenges faced by Universities in Zimbabwe**

As with many African countries, the education of Zimbabwe has its roots in its colonial history, characterized by a broader primary and narrower tertiary education. By extension the racial imbalances that were a feature of the colonial times were reflected in the education system where there was unequal access to education between the white and black communities. To address these anomalies and inequalities, the education system has undergone major reforms over the past 20 years, with the principle of education for all adopted at independence in 1980 (Kapungu 2007)

Universities in Zimbabwe are housed under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary education whose vision is to *“Guarantee Zimbabwe as a leader in the creation and use of new and existing knowledge, skills, attitudes and resources through the local mobilization and provision of quality higher and tertiary education”*.

Universities like the general economy of Zimbabwe are faced by a plethora of challenges some of which threaten their existence. Gurira (2012) Principal Director HR, admin and Finance for the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) while Zimbabwe’s universities face challenges mainly related to lack of funding there are also challenges related to massive enrolment numbers. The “massification” of tertiary education (that is increased numbers in high education) is a worldwide phenomenon from which Zimbabwe and other developing nations have not been spared. Increased enrolments have a direct bearing on quality assurance not least in terms of the lecturer student ration but also the available resources such as library facilities may not be adequate to cater for large numbers. The major challenge is how you provide quality education in a context of increased numbers against a background of limited and dwindling funding.

Furthermore all public higher education institutions are heavily dependent on the fescues for capital and recurrent expenditures. Gurira (2010) notes that on average it is estimated 80% of budgetary support is from the fescues, 15% fees and 55 from other sources. This is obviously unsustainable hence there is need for universities to diversify funding sources especially in context where the cake is getting smaller. However, such diversification may result in strategic decay or drift whereby (Ehlers and Lazeby (2012) universities may neglect their mandate in pursuit of financial independence. This crisis of institutions is exacerbated by the formidable economic, social and political challenges encountered by our nation in the ten years following the onset of the land reform programme (2001 to 2010). When the macroeconomic environment took nose dive, the institutions could not escape the irresistible vortex triggered by the land revolution. The combined effect of these factors culminates in;

- Massive brain drains as lecturers leave for greener pastures.
- Slow and inadequate infrastructure development this is typical so given that most of local universities such as Great Zimbabwe University and the Reformed Church University were born during this most challenging period in the economic history of the country.
- According to ZIMCHE the combination of these factors has resulted in the inability of higher education institutions to deliver on their mandates.
- Low staff morale

The PWC talent and Education Survey shows that business leaders (mindful of HRD Costs) are looking to government and tertiary institutions to do more to help plug the skills gap. Two in five CEOs say creating skilled workforce should be one of government's top three priorities and over half (52%) believe that regulating is hampering their ability to attract the best people. Only one in five feels that their government has been effective in improving workforce skills in their region.

Seegers of the PWC concludes: "CEOs are laying much of the blame for the skills shortage at the feet of government and legislators, but should accept they need to rethink the way they

think about, look for and value their employees. CEOs should be taking advantage of the development in HR data analytics to predict the skills they will need and plan for changes in demand and supply.”

However, recent comments by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni comments that university Humanities programmes are useless seem to have caught on in Zimbabwe. While it may be that his comments were taken out of context they are nonetheless unfortunate and unbecoming of national leaders, locally there has been an elevated status to natural sciences for example an opinion piece on [www.iharare.com](http://www.iharare.com) opined that “...and as such it’s difficult to enroll into meaningful programs like Medicine, Geology, Engineering or Computing or Law. What opinion do they have now besides enrolling in these stupid programmes like Financial Intelligence, Sociology, cultural studies etc...” while such programmes can be meaningful and give prestige the question that should be asked is are they the programmes that industry needs.

Industry relevance is often sacrificed for the pursuit of academic status, for example a University may wish to brand itself as the foremost institution on law thus focuses on monopolizing that field without reference to whether such pursuit is relevant to industry needs.

## **2.6 Stakeholder Participation in Curriculum Development**

Foskett (2013) argues that like any other area of social activity, education goes through phases of change which fundamentally affect how it operates. The fundamental educationist must ask themselves who is driving the change. She further argues that the priorities for change may be inherent as new and better ways of doing things are sought in response to some perceived need of the practitioners. Alternatively, the priorities may be extrinsic as the stakeholders within society impose content, methods or structures which they perceive will ‘improve’ the education process.

Kapunga (2007) weighs in on the subject of stakeholders involvement as she argues that there is little engagement between students and business or employers. Engaging the business sector in education benefits the youths, schools, and the employers. The transition from school to employment is eased by the development of students' attitude towards work. Raised aspirations coming about from increased knowledge and of a better future also lead to improved academic performance. Partnerships between universities and business could be formed by lecturers visiting business and employers visiting schools, or incorporating short placements into the secondary school system. This is absent in the Zimbabwean school system, with some degree programmes at university do not include placements.

According to the Report on National Committee of Inquiry in Higher Education (Dearing, 1997) Dearing Report Recommendation No. 18 encouraged *“institutions to identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them reflect on such experience”*

Addressing guests at the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)'s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations where he was guest of honor, Acting Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Chombo remarked that *“there is need to identify knowledge and skills gaps in industry and commerce and also in communities in order to come up with relevant, development-oriented programmes appropriate in addressing the challenges we face today.* Such remarks patently demonstrated the lack of integration between employers and academics.

Foskett (2007) however, proposes that non-involvement of employers in university activity is not willful. There are barriers to their involvement which relate to that nature of the institutions in the partnership and the way that their different priorities, attitudes, values and modes of operating affect their ability to work collaboratively. Academics and practitioners may have different opinions and definitions of what constitutes relevant curriculum, such cultural and perspective only help to perpetuate the differences. Furthermore as would be expected in any public service arena, the lack of resources to support collaborative curriculum development was seen by all respondents as a major barrier. This is just about

finances but also includes a lack of skilled staff, time and other resources such as books, access to information technology and space.

Rees of Centre for Career Management Skills has eight distinct modes of engagement with employers of employer engagement in higher and tertiary education so as to improve employability of graduates. The model as shown below embraces the concept of change driven education, it call for academics to reflect on their work in the context of input from employing organizations.



*Fig. 4 Types of industry involvement (Source Centre for Career Management Skills)*

## **Chapter Summary**

What is clear from the analysis of research on tertiary institutions is that universities do not operate in a vacuum; they are mandated by society and are expected to do their part as corporate citizens. The alleviation of societal problems is hinged on the ability of universities to produce graduates with a unique blend of skills that provide answers to societal challenges. The discussion of relevant literature has also demonstrated the gap in local literature and research is so far as evaluative research concerning the adequacy of university curriculum in addressing skills needs is concerned. More poignantly it can be seen that educationists and practitioners may have different attitudes and expectations in so far as the aims of university education is concerned.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter provides the methodology to be used for data collection, analysis and presentation of the findings. The population and sample selection for the study are also discussed. The methodology is customized to meet the purpose of the study which is an investigation into adequacy of Zimbabwe tertiary education curriculum in addressing industry skills requirements in Zimbabwe. The sections in the chapter includes the research philosophy, research design, the target population , sampling design, sampling size, sampling procedure, sources of data, data collection approach and the analysis and presentation of data.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

There are different approaches to research based on the inquirer's values, assumptions and beliefs about the world, Donald and Pamela (2003). In this study, the researcher will adopt a combination of both the positivist and advocacy. Positivism is based upon values of reason, truth and validity and there is a focus purely on facts, gathered through direct observation and experience and measured empirically using quantitative methods surveys and experiments and statistical analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). Advocacy is collaborative in nature and change oriented. The application of advocacy will be applicable to get respondents' active participation in the study. With advocacy the respondents are empowered and any inquiry is conducted directly with respondents. This helps in ensuring objectivity in the study and maintaining a balance in the most economical way of managing cost and time for this research. Thus the researcher will apply both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data.

#### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design constitute decisions regarding what, when, where, how much and by what means, concerning a research study. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in manner that aims to combine relevance to the research



purpose with economy in procedure. The research will be exploratory in nature as the researcher seeks to investigate the adequacy of tertiary curriculum against industrial expectations.

O'Leary (2005), suggests that research purpose can be classified into exploratory and descriptive research. Exploratory studies are generally served by a single case that is where there is no previous theory. Burns and Groove (2003) define exploratory research as research conducted to gain insights, discover new ideas and/or increase knowledge for a phenomenon. Descriptive survey is concerned with identifying and counting the frequency at one point in time or at various times or comparison. Descriptive research gives researchers the opportunity to use both quantitative and qualitative data in order to find data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon that is being studied. The researcher will use the descriptive research.

The choice of research strategy is typically informed by set of decisions about research design and by beliefs about how the social world can be studied and how the validity of social knowledge established by such research might be assessed. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) define a strategy as a general plan of how to go about answering the research question(s) set. It specifies the sources from which the researcher intends to collect the data and considers the constraints that the researcher will inevitably have. The research will also use quantitative analytical techniques to draw inferences from this data. In this research structured questionnaires will be used to gather and interpret data.

### **3.4 Data Collection Approach**

The researcher will adopt mainly a qualitative approach but will equally use quantitative techniques mainly on data presentation and analysis. A qualitative method concerns recording, analyzing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behavior and experience to gain a rich and complex understanding of people's experience and not obtaining information which can be generalized to other groups. According to Holloway (2005) qualitative research involves the systematic collection and

analysis of subjective narrative and intuitive fashion to identify the characteristics and the significance of human experience. Its is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning, Burns and Grove (2003); Morse and Field (1996; 1999)

In this study the researcher will use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Interpretation will be made from readily available data, graphs, and chats to explain more trends from the result of the study. The uses of the quantitative method will precision through quantitative and reliable measurement and control of data. Further, this made statistical analysis of data easy by the use of quantitative methods. Quantitative methods will be used to gather numerical information on key performance indicators that define sustainability and trough qualitative methods further analysis of why situation occurred in a particular way was possible.

### 3.5 Study Population

According to Burns & Groove (2003) the population includes all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study.

Category	Total Population	Sample Size	%
Lecturers	750	30	4.00
MSU Graduates (employed in parastatals)	500	50	10.00
Senior Executives	100	20	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.50</b>

There are several parastatals that are head quartered in Harare. The bulk of these have minimum 15 to 25 employees at senior level. The research will utilize 10 selected parastatals.

Thus the target population of this study will be drawn from Harare Head Quarters and Midlands State University which consists of the 10 parastatals and 1 university hence a total population participation of 1350 research participants. While this can suggest a selection bias, the population in Harare Province constitutes 50% of the entire population of parastatals in Zimbabwe therefore representative to draw conclusions from the study. Also due to time constraints, the research was limited to Harare province where the researched is a full time employee of ZINWA.

### **3.5.1 Sampling Design**

Sampling design is an outline of how sample is derived from a target population. Saunders et al. (1997) defines sample as a relatively small subset of population with advantages over census in that costs, time and resources are much less. Jupp (2006:265-7) explains that research design refers to the ‘underlying strategy that justifies logic structure and principles of the research methods and methodologies and how these relate to the research question, proposition and hypothesis.’ The researcher will adopt a survey method. This will allow in-depth understanding of the adequacy of tertiary education curriculum in addressing industry skills requirement because according to Yin (1984) it is inductive in nature that is, explaining concepts from a particular reference point to the general environment. Using a sample to represent the population is less time consuming and with lower costs than conducting a census of the population.

### **3.5.2 Sample Size**

The size of the sample is determined by the optimum number necessary to enable valid inferences to be made about the population. According to Padilla (2003), a sample of 30% respondents is the minimum acceptable sample for a research. For the purposes of this research a random sample of 10 parastatals will be drawn using random sampling translation to 225 employees. Considering that the parastatals in Zimbabwe have homogenous characteristics, a sample at 30% of the population will be representative to draw conclusions about research problem. However as a cost and time containment measure supported by the decision making and knowledge base residing with top management in the various institutions, the sample will focus on the executive management in these institutions.

As such the resultant sample will be 80 senior and middle management from 10 parastatals and 1 university.

### **3.5.3 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher acknowledges that there are two types of sampling techniques namely, probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Under probability sampling, there are three main methods of randomly selecting respondents, namely simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling. The researcher will use probability, simple random sampling. Probability sampling techniques are superior to non-probability methods in the sense that they minimize the chances of bias in the selection process. Its main advantage lies in its ability to make inference can be made to make the population and it is cost effective.

### **3.5.4 Simple Random Sampling**

A simple random sample of 10 parastatals and 1 university will be taken to represent the total population of parastatals in Harare. The 10 parastatals represent 30% of the population of the parastatals in Harare hence a fair representation of the total population. Simple random sampling gives all parastatals in the population an equal chance to be selected in the sample. The researcher will use random sampling because it is easy to use and is not biased or skewed. The sampling technique provided the results much faster as compared to a census.

### **3.5.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In this research, questionnaires and interviews will be used as the data collection instruments.

#### **3.5.5.1 Questionnaires**

Jupp (2005) defines a questionnaire as a set of well thought and guided questions administered to a respondent in anticipation of response which will help to answer the conundrum of the research question. Accordingly, self-administered questionnaires will be administered to all

participants. The questionnaires will be specifically a combination of both closed and open ended questions. As such, they will permit the researcher to cover many respondents in a relatively short space of time since he will leave the questionnaires and collect them all at once. Furthermore, a questionnaire upholds the level of confidentiality since respondents will not be mandated to disclose their particulars or names. This will limit bias and improve dialogue.

However, the major disadvantage of questionnaires is low response rate (Wenger 2000). In this study the researcher in order to make high response rate, will follow up with the respondents and in some instances wait for the respondents to complete the questionnaires. Furthermore most of the questions will be closed, facilitating choice to respondents while very few questions will be open to probe for further information.

#### **3.5.5.2 Questionnaire Design**

The design of questionnaire was done by subdividing it into sections, attention being on the type of question, order of questions and the structure and wording of questions. The section to be covered will focus demographic information, worker contribution, and parastatal performance, how universities structured the demographics among an array of other aspects. The researcher will also use a Likert rating scale in some of the questions where respondents will for example be asked how much they agreed with statements provided in relation to research objectives. A well-structured and undisguised questionnaire will ensure that accurate, unbiased and relevant data of the correct type was gathered in line with the research objectives. The semi structured part of the questionnaire will give flexibility to get explanations and more information from respondents.

#### **3.5.5.3 Questionnaire pre-testing**

In order to test validity, reliability and clarity of the questionnaire, the researcher will do a pretest with respondents in the main study population. Pretesting will assist in evaluating whether the questions are adequately capturing and measuring the concepts specified by the

research objectives. Questionnaires will be distributed to ZINWA after which the researcher will analyse the adequacy of the design of the questionnaire

#### **3.5.5.4 Questionnaire Administration**

In compliance with ethical considerations the researcher will close self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires can be administered through the following approaches: personal, postal, internet and group administrations. As such based on the level and connectivity of the researcher questionnaires will be distributed in person.

#### **3.5.6 Interviews**

Interviewing refers to structured or unstructured verbal communication between the researcher and the participants in which information is provided to the researcher. According to Kothari (2004) an interview is a conversation with a purpose which involves the exhibition of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. This will allow the researcher to acquire vast data from the horse's mouth and go deeper than the depths of a mere questionnaire.

The researcher will follow the following steps with each interviewer:

- i) Made an appointment with each participant at a time which suited them
- ii) Thanked the participant for the time and willingness to be part of the study.
- iii) Assured the participant that the information obtained was confidential and solely for academic purposes
- iv) Explained that the interviewer was to be instructed and that probing questions would be determined by the information given by the participant.
- v) Asked for permission to record the interview

##### **3.5.6.1 Face to Face Interviews**

The researcher will take a deliberate strategy of using face to face interviews which besides affording probing also encouraged the generation of new ideas as respondents would be

limited to some extent by closed-ended questions. The researcher will use the same questions as in the questionnaire during personal interviews so as to ease the analysis of the data from a common perspective. During the face to face interviews the researcher will take some notes which were transcribed into questionnaire format soon after the interview to avoid the researcher distorting the data by failing to recall responses given by the participants. Face to face interviews will be conducting noting that these afforded the researcher the opportunity to judge the respondent's comprehension of the issues at hand. With open-ended questions, the researcher was in a position to probe for additional information as well as seek immediate clarification was necessary. The researcher will have more opportunity to provide more details on the scope and extent on some of the questions asked in order to allow the respondents better understand the questions. The biggest advantage of using face to face interviews was that more information will be gathered from the respondents. However the face to face interviews may prove to be expensive in terms of time. As a result, a limited number of participants will be interviewed. The researcher will avoid the use of technical jargon and preferred simple language.

### **3.5.7 Data Sources and Collection**

The researcher will extract data from both secondary and primary sources in order to meet the objectives.

#### **3.5.7.1 Secondary Data Sources**

Although the results of the research will be highly dependent on the primary sources that the research gathered from questionnaires and interviews, it will also require that some secondary sources be used to understand the concepts, definitions, theories and empirical results. The researcher will use several books, research literature, article, journals from libraries and the internet. Secondary data will be helpful in providing data that is already analyzed and interpreted and compiled for other studies. The advantages of using secondary data include saving in time, manpower and resources in sampling and data collection procedures. According Wegner (2009) the data is already in existence, access time is relatively short and the data is relatively less expensive to acquire. The disadvantages of using secondary data include the fact that data quality might be questionable, data collected is out of date and

hence inappropriate, geographical coverage of the survey may not coincide with the researcher's requirements and that strata of the population covered may not be appropriate for the purpose. Secondary data may not be subject to further manipulation and also combining various sources should lead to errors of collation and introduce bias. It is also for this reason that primary data will be mainly used.

### **3.5.7.2 Primary Data**

In compiling primary data, the researcher will use research tools of questionnaires and interviews. These tools will be guided by the research objectives and questions outlined in Chapter One. Primary data will be used to a larger extent than secondary data because the problem needs fresh and clear explanation and description which could not be achieved through secondary data. The use of primary data will be also considered for its benefit and ability to be relevant to the problem at hand and that it generally offers greater control by the researcher over data accuracy. The disadvantages of primary data are that it is time consuming (Wegner, 2000).

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter showed how the researcher will carry out the research using the advantages derived from a survey using primary and secondary data, use of questionnaires and interviews as the research instruments. The validity and reliability of each method to be used was explained. Raw data to be collected will be edited, coded, analyzed and recorded.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section covers data presentation and analysis. The data was collected from all the respondents through the use of self administered questionnaires and interviews. Data presentation will be done under themes and sub themes that are derived from objectives. After each section of presentation data will be analysed to avoid representing data.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The research was initially targeted at 80 respondents from senior executives, lecturers and graduates. Out of the targeted 25 executives only 17 constituting 60% availed themselves for interviews and returned questionnaires. The research was targeted at obtaining data from 25 lecturers and 20 which translate to 80% managed to fill and return the questionnaires in time. Thirty (30) graduates were targeted by the researcher and 25 managed to respond to the questionnaires and interviews. The overall response rate as indicated in Table 1 below was 78%.

CATEGORY	TARGETED	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE
Senior Executives	25	17	60%
Lecturers	25	20	80%
Graduates (MSU)	30	25	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78%</b>

*Table 1: Overall Questionnaire and Interviews response rate*

### **4.3 Analysis of Response rate**

According to Babbie (1973) and Kidder (1981) as cited in Richardson (2005) they argue that 50% is regarded as an acceptable response rate in social research postal surveys. By extension based on the above view the research managed to obtain data from 62 out of a targeted sample of 80, this represents a 78% response and as such the researcher found it to an acceptable and reliable response rate upon which research conclusions could be made. The rest of the respondents from all categories had a busy schedule and as a result it was hard to get information from them. However Babbie (1973) laments that the assertions regarding the adequacy or otherwise of a particular percentage response rate appear to be made without reference to any theoretical justification or to the total number of potential respondents. The author went on to suggest that behind the assertions appears to be a balance between rational and political considerations of acceptability, hence the need to have a theoretically justified, systematic way to calculate the response rate.

### **4.4 Sample Demographics and characteristics**

The research had a 78% response rate as indicated above. In terms of demographics data was collected from 62 respondents both male and female. Out of the 62 respondents 22 were female and 40 were male, who participated from all the 3 categories. Thirty (30) were falling between the 20 – 30 years category, with 20 being graduates, 7 lecturers and 3 young executives. Eighteen (18) respondents were between the age ranges of 31 – 40 years category, with 4 executives, 9 lecturers and 5 graduates. Only 16 respondents were between the ages 41 – 40 with 9 of them being executives from different companies and 3 senior lecturers. Only 2 respondents were above the ages of 51. The table below summarizes that major demographic characteristics of all the respondents.

AGE	GENDER		EDUCATION					LEVEL		
	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>MSc</i>	<i>Deg.</i>	<i>Dip.</i>	<i>A-Level</i>	<i>PHD</i>	<i>Executives</i>	<i>Lecturers</i>	<i>Graduates</i>
20-30	15	15	7	19	3	1	-	3	7	20
31-40	4	14	10	8	-	-	-	4	9	5
41-50	2	10	6	4	-		2	9	3	-
51+	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>

*Table. 2: Sample demographics (Source Field Research)*

As shown above in Table 2. 65% of the respondents were male thus the gender participation was almost 1 female for every 2 males. The main reason may be attributed to gender imbalance that is still prevalent in organisations. The bulk of the female respondents were falling between the ages of 20 – 30 categories mainly being graduates from Universities. The number of females would further go down as one moves up to the higher levels, which might be taken as the an indication that the industry is still facing challenges in terms of addressing gender balance issues.

#### **4.5 Designing and developing University curriculum.**

The first research objective researcher was to determine how the University curriculum is designed and developed through a questionnaire administered to University lecturers. Out of the 20 respondents that contributed 5 key methods of designing the curriculum were identified by the respondents. Five (5) respondents indicated that the University normally benchmarks its curriculum with other universities. The 5 respondents went on to suggest that MSU has some of its programmes benchmarked against other universities like the University of Zimbabwe, Makerere University in Uganda where the University took its parallel program structure, from. One (1) respondent from the Faculty of Social Science indicated that the University’s programs were designed to match the European standards of best practices.

Eight (8) respondents indicated that in their department they relied mainly on consultations with industry. The above respondents suggested that the students they were offering their degree program were destined to satisfy the needs of industry and as such they went on to explain that industry help to shape and develop the curriculum through addressing central issues and challenges. The same views were supported through the views that were obtained from 7 senior executives who indicated that over time they had helped through their contribution. One (1) respondent from the executives went in to explain that consultation was at times through direct involvement or indirectly through public lecturers that he was offering to the University.

Seven (7) lecturers indicated that they were developing their curriculum based on the feedback from the students who will have gone for work related learning. Three (3) of these lectures further explained that when they assess and supervise students they get to understand areas that the students will be lacking and as such they use that to redesign and develop their modules. The same view was reiterated by both graduates and senior executives. Six (6) graduates indicated that they also believe to contribute through the reports they write on all areas they identify as limited in their curriculum.

Five (5) lecturers proposed lecturer innovation as one method of curriculum development. The 5 respondent were of the view that lecturers are able to understand their field and the changes that will BE taking place in the labour market. As such equipped with this knowledge they then use it to develop their programs such that the student s being produced will have the necessary skills and experienced the industry requires. The responses of the above lectures were in line with the response from 10 senior executives who indicated that they like to recruit graduates who will come and have a difference in industry. They went on to explain that the graduates should have product knowledge and skill to make things done and industry tick.

Six (6) lecturers indicated that the other method used to design and develop curriculum was the use of research results. As academics 1 of the respondent suggests that they are able to carry out research either directly or indirectly through supervising dissertations. They

suggested that dissertations are crucial as they seek to address challenges industry is facing from these dissertations and other direct researches carried out information to develop the existing curriculum will be covered. The tables below indicate the major methods used by lecturers in developing the curriculum.

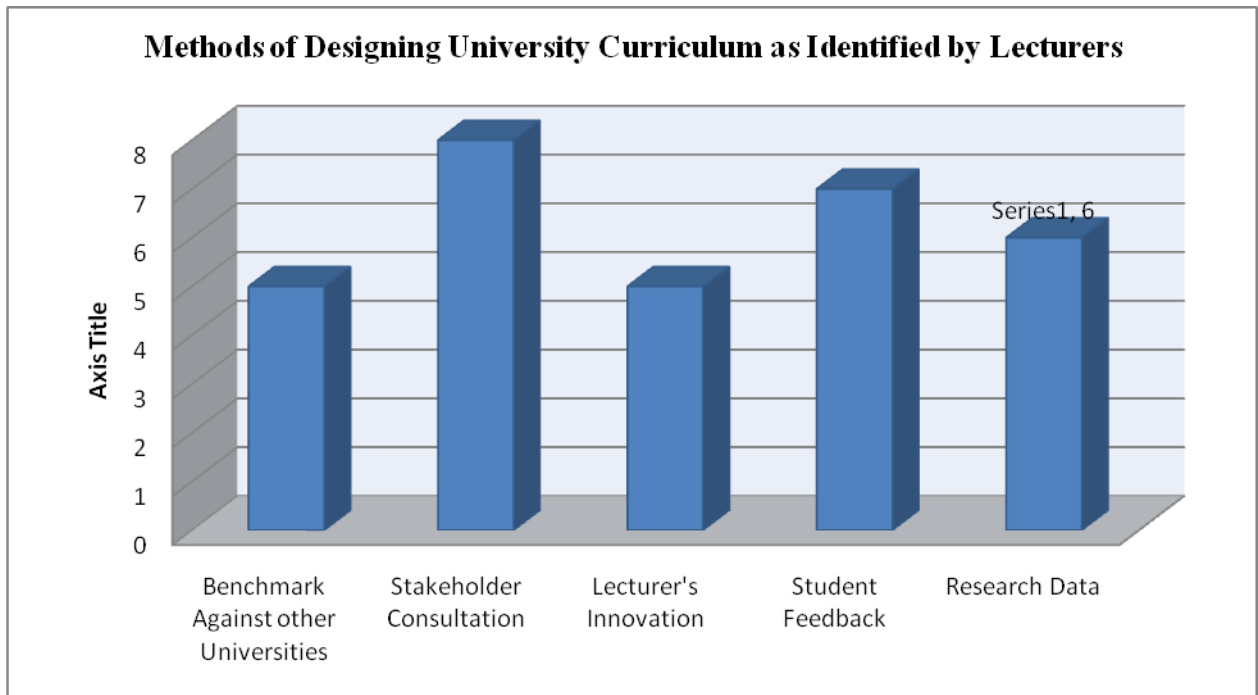


Fig. 5: Methods of Curriculum Development as identified by Lecturers (Field Research)

Seven respondents representing lecturers went on to explain that in Zimbabwe the tertiary institutions are governed by ZIMCHE which is a body that is solely responsible to ensure that quality prevails in Universities. The respondents suggested that all Universities are standardised and as such ZIMCHE ensure that Universities provides the basics that are need by industry as a governing body. Thus the lecturers were of the view that the involvement of ZIMCHE in standardisation of the curriculum was enough to ensure that the graduates that are produced are of a high quality and calibre.

In trying to understand all the stakeholders involved a direct question was asked to lecturers to disclose their key stakeholders. The twenty (20) lecturers reiterated that the University had a number of stakeholders. Seven (7) of the lecturers pointed out that the students were the critical stakeholders. They justified this by suggesting that they were there to serve the interest of students as such they further pointed out that they were there to implement the

curriculum that meet their interest as key stakeholders. Six (6) lecturers went on to suggest that employers were their crucial stakeholder as they were producing a graduate who was to add value in industry, albeit facing any change. Four (4) other lecturers pointed out in all the curriculum issues in Universities ZIMCHE was not spared rather it was a critical stakeholder through its polices that carry the day. Three (3) respondents then pointed out that the parent Ministry was equally an important stakeholder in ensuring the Universities are fulfilling their mandate. This is illustrated below:-

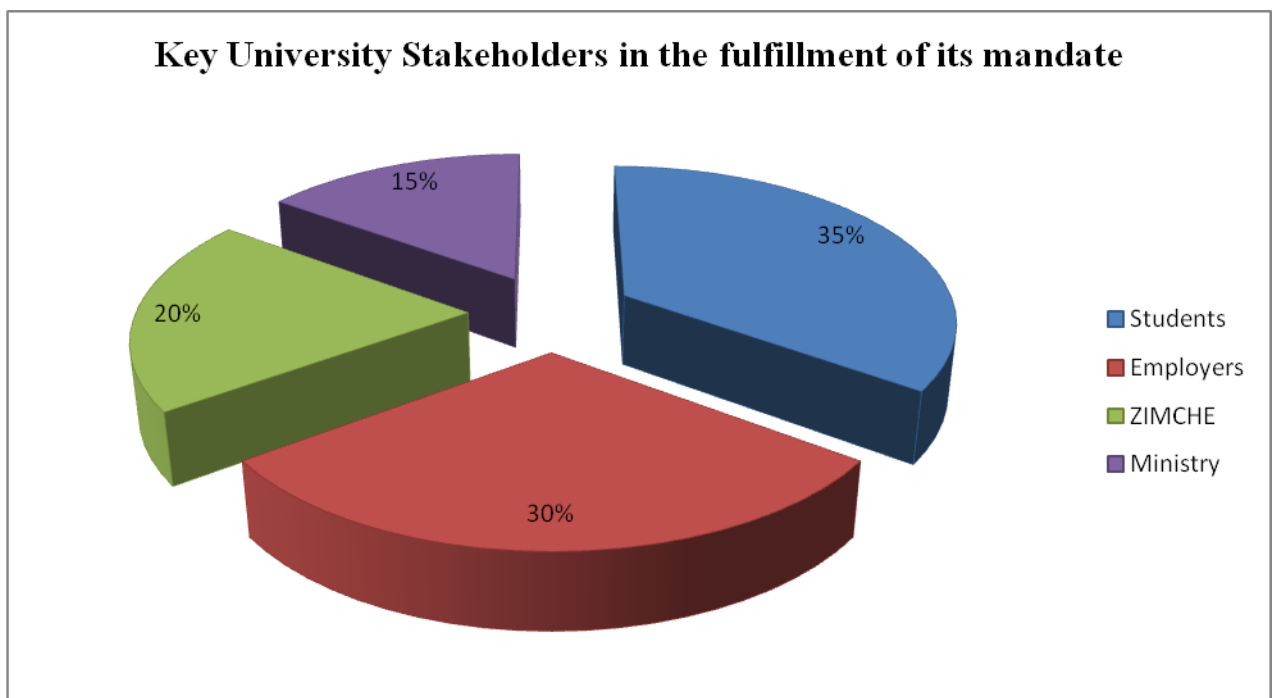


Fig. 6: Key university stakeholders in fulfilling its mandate (Source Field Research)

#### 4.6 Analysis

The methods identified above of curriculum development are all very crucial in determining curriculum. Chombo (2009) lamented that the academic qualifications do not seem to be dove-tailed to organisational expectations. From the finding it is clear that while the views by Chombo (2009) are crucial efforts are being made by universities to produce and channel graduates that fits decisively the industrial needs and expectations. Through consultations with key stakeholders areas lagging in the curriculum are looked at and are dealt with. With key stakeholders mainly industries the students that will be produced will have the necessary skills need to ensure that business succeed in all its endeavours. Chombo (2009) went on to suggest that Universities are therefore viewed as utopian and theoretical with little practical

relevance. In other words universities, being academic institutions, suffer from selective homogeneity (Price 2001; 254) that is, producing graduates who fit more into the University (academic) system than industry.

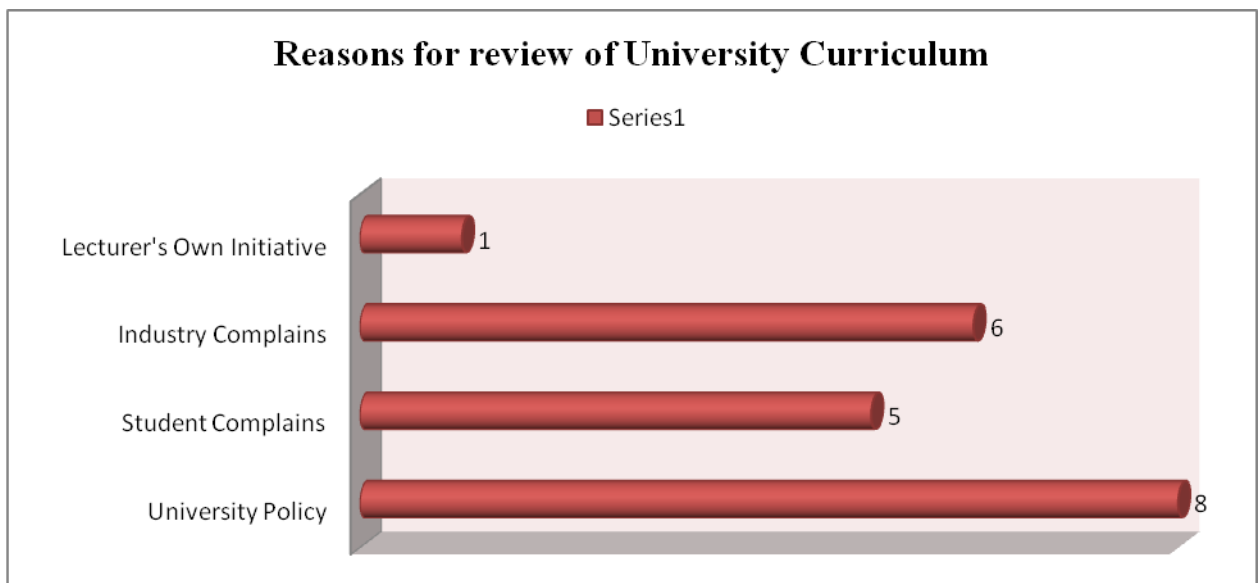
It is interesting to note that 25% of lecturers indicated lecturer innovation as another strategy in place are the views by Candy, Crebert and O'Leary (1994, p.60) who suggest that "the concept of 'curriculum' in the University setting was unfamiliar to many academics, who developed and taught units or courses to reflect their own interests with little attention to ensuring coherence or identifying the aims and objectives of teaching". This observation is key as it waters down the development of curriculum based on the lecturer's innovations. The lecturer view of things may not be in line with what industry expect and as such due care should be taken.

Interesting to note from the findings is the fact that respondents suggested that when designing their curriculum they benchmark. This goes hand in glove with the views by Fitz and Bendell (1993) who suggested that benchmarking refers to the continuous process of measuring products, services and practices against the leading competitors. In other words benchmarking is synonymous with a search for best practice. In this regard it may be an undeniable fact that benchmarking done by MSU may result in the University producing the most enterprising graduate who will add value in industry at large and as such benchmarking by MSU may be the most sensible aspect of ensuring that all issues that are topical are addressed through emulating the best practices.

The research also suggests that massive participation by the captains of industry in the curriculum development. This is not a unique or new phenomenon in Zimbabwe but was evidenced by views of Lemmer and Badenhost (1997) who satirically suggests that like parents, employers have also an input in curriculum development because they know the curriculum that is marketable in the world of work. This involvement may further explain why MSU is heavily populated. The overpopulation may mean the value that people are placing on MSU as it is channelling graduates of a high quality that adds value and give companies a competitive advantage.

#### 4.7 Curriculum and industry expectation

The question on how the curriculum is able to meet industrial expectations was asked to both lecturers and senior executives. Twenty (20) lecturers who participated in the study unanimously agreed that the curriculum being offered by the University was in line with industry expectations. They made reference to the fact that they incorporate the views of industry when they will be developing and designing the curriculum. Twelve (12) lecturers indicated that the curriculum is reviewed on yearly basis as a matter of policy. The following pie chart shows the reasons for the frequency of curriculum review:



*Fig: 7 Reasons for review of university curriculum as argued by Lecturers*

The above graph suggests the considerations that are made by lecturers in determining the review of the University curriculum. Eight (8) respondents suggested that as a matter of policy all department review their curriculum based on industry expectations. Six lecturers indicated that students' recommendations can also influence curriculum development and normally this complains comes from student from work related learning and visiting who are in industry. Six (6) managerial respondents cited also that the University through complains from captains of industry in different programs and areas, lecturers through their departmental boards create new modules aimed at covering any difference as recommended by industry. One lecturer respondent representing the HR department gave an example that captains of industry were complaining that the HR students were lacking massive knowledge



in relation to payroll and benefits. Through the complaints by industry a module tailor made to address such challenges was introduced. This way the respondent suggested was the only viable way to ensure that the program matches the expectations of industry. The same views were also supported by 7 captains of industry who indicated that they all had complained after realizing the limitations with graduates and have recommended directly to the respective departments.

The researcher through an interview to one of the doctors sought to find out what the University is doing to ensure that there is match between what the University produces and what the industry expect. The respondent indicated that the University's curriculum was not an isolated act as the curriculum follows the agenda of the country and industrial demands. The respondent further explained that University education is not done in isolation from what industry expect since the graduates are being prepared for industry. The same views were reiterated by 5 other respondents from different departments who unanimously agreed that the curriculum really adds value. One of the 5 respondents from the lecturers went on to explain that the reason for work related learning was to ensure that the students appreciate practice and link that with theory. This was done by the University to have all students coming back equipped with knowledge to conquer the workplace, hence the student influence on curriculum.

To ensure an equitable well balanced data the researcher through an interview asked 12 executives their views on the University graduates. One executive indicated that while efforts by Universities were plausible there was no industry for them to test the relevancy of what they have covered. The respondent further clarified that the bulk of University students in Zimbabwe are placed in areas they are not really specialised and as a result they provide bad results and the blame is given on Universities yet the main challenge is the industry itself. One other executive went on to suggest that while University efforts are fair MSU in particular has a massive problem of mass production. The respondent went on to suggest that there are programs that are overcrowded which makes it difficult for a fair assessment and evaluation of students efforts by the lecturer. The respondent went on to explain that because of that students may miss certain issues.

#### **4.8 Analysis**

According to the International Institute for Education (IIE: 2007), Universities play a crucial role in generating new ideas, and in accumulating and transmitting knowledge, yet they have remained peripheral to development concerns. This is a crucial fact that will ensure industry benefits from the University education. Mbizvo (2012) suggest that tertiary education institutions have a vital function in supporting industry growth through generation of innovative and enterprising graduates. This is a key point as it heralds the significance and importance of involving industry managers in the development of educational. As such when Universities are designing their curriculum they have to bear in mind the need to ensure that the curriculum addresses the needs of industry. The match between the two will result in good results being produced.

Key (1999) suggests that currently available versions of stakeholder theory put the organisation at the centre of the system and do not consider the changing nature of relationships. The author's views are upheld by Munzvembiri (2014) who suggest that the University school curriculum is an issue of core importance that needs to be looked at. Existing courses need to be reviewed, new courses recommended and approved and the overall efficacy of courses needs to be periodically re-evaluated to ensure the skills being taught, are aligned to the requirements in industry. This assertion holds water since it helps Universities to design a curriculum that fits industrial expectations. Zimbabwe is one of the countries that prides itself in having high literacy rates, highly qualified personnel and producing a number of graduates a year. These graduates however are viewed with suspicion as some feel the interface between the educational curriculum and industry should be properly aligned.

According to the Commission of the European Communities, (2006) higher and tertiary education curriculum around the world is witnessing a significant shift in its expectations to help address immediate and longer-term sustainable development challenges. The above view is crucial since it calls for universities to produce graduates that will address the challenges being faced by industry. Currently the Zimbabwean firms are facing serious challenges in managing viability challenges. Graduates therefore have a massive challenge of coming up with key ideas of sustaining the economy. This therefore provides a platform for universities to ensure that the very graduates add value.

#### 4.9 The interface between recruitment requirements and University graduate qualifications

The researcher sought to find out the interface between recruitment requirements and University qualifications. The researcher through a questionnaire went on to ask the attributes that the employer looks at when recruiting graduates. Three (3) respondents from the executives indicated that they consider technical ability.

Five (5) other respondents further reiterated that they consider leadership potential. One respondent indicated that they consider business acumen. Six (6) other executives pointed out that they consider qualifications of the graduates from all universities. Four (4) executives went on to suggest that they consider maturity of the graduates, 4 others indicated that they need work experience, loyalty and personal characteristics. The table below summarizes the views of the respondents on the attributes employers look for in job candidates:

ATTRIBUTE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS NOMINATING THIS ATTRIBUTE
Technical Ability	3
Leadership Potential	5
Business Acumen	1
Qualifications & Experience	6
Maturity	4
Personal Characteristics	5
Loyalty to Previous Employer	2

*Table 5: Attributes that employers look for in graduates*

To ensure a balanced presentation the researcher went on to ask the graduates that which they think is necessary in their curriculum from the University in industry. Ten (10) graduates identified analytical skills that are obtained through their curriculum, 5 others identified technical skills as a necessary tool. Seven other graduates indicated that they gained the

necessary experience and skill to perform several tasks. The graduates further indicated that their curriculum was enough to meet the needs and expectations of industry and as a result they were fully convinced that they were the best to take all challenges in industry. Six graduates were of the view that through their curriculum they felt they were actually meeting the industrial expectations and the other 7 were over qualified. The graph below summarizes graduates perceptions of existing university curriculum:

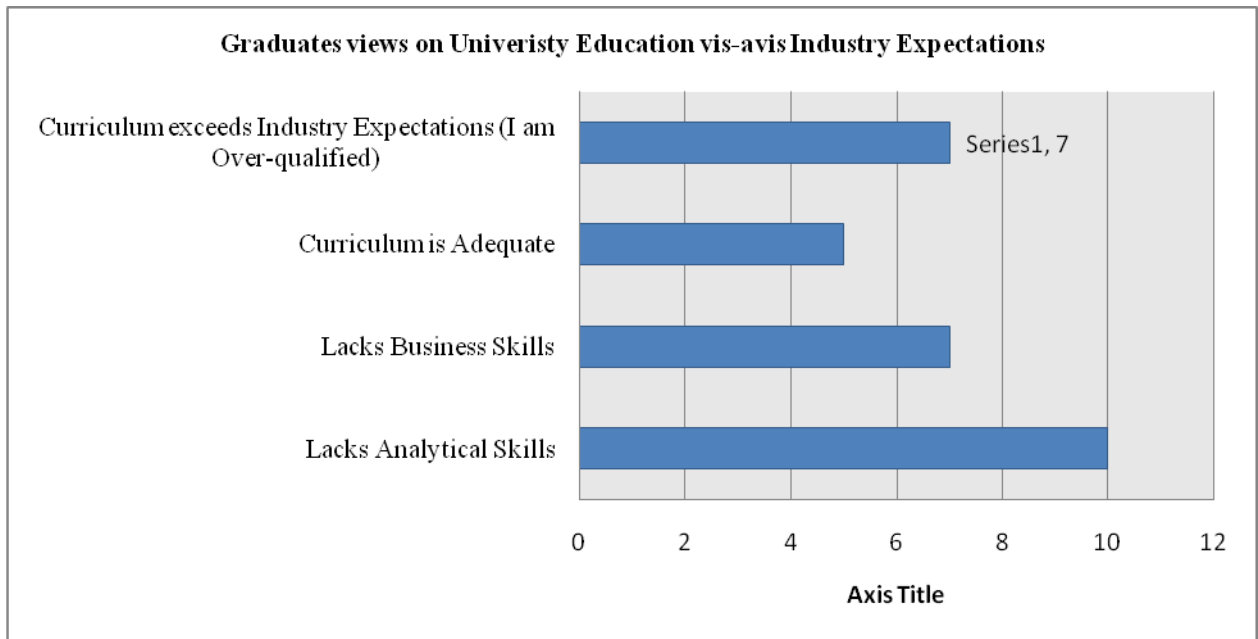
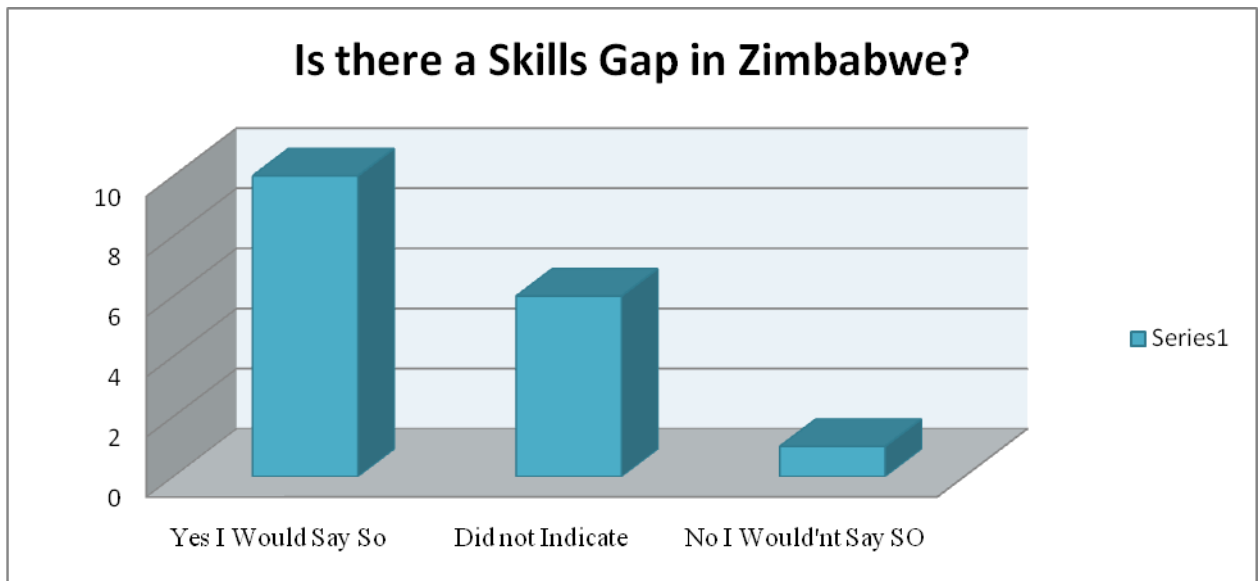


Fig. 8: Graduate view on university education vis-à-vis industry expectations

The researcher went on to determine from executives if they were facing any challenges in terms of ensuring hiring graduates. Six (6) executives indicated that at times they fail to get a graduate with the relevant skills to fill the post which then forces them at times to consider taking the service of an individual within the organisation already with the skill and not the qualification. This view was supported by 4 other executives who justified as such a move by reiterating that a certificate is just but a qualification and one can have a degree but being the worst performer. These respondents indicated that most graduates have relevant qualification but limited knowledge and skill to take up posts in companies. The research intended to see if industry perceives a skills gap in Zimbabwe to this end executives were asked whether they thought there is a skills gap in Zimbabwe and their responses are summarised below:-



*Fig. 9: Is there a skills gap in Zimbabwe*

As shown in Fig. 9 above the majority of senior executives believe that there is a skills gap in Zimbabwe while only 1 contends that there is no skills gap. The remainder are in between and not sure hence they did not indicate.

#### **4.10 Analysis**

Mpinganjira (2009) suggest that in today's world, industries are experiencing rapid changes which are propelled by various factors such as trade blocks, globalization, internationalization, changes in technologies and intense competition among companies and countries. He went to suggests that these changes have a profound impact on higher education institutions, as providers of a competitive workforce that contribute positively to the economic development of a country. This argument adds value by suggesting that economic development is determined by what the universities produce. This is crucial in determining how the curriculum is developed and revised.

Experience is indeed the greatest teacher and the identified executive in the data presentation suggested that experience is one of their key considerations. However in my view one person can have 20 years experience of doing things in a wrong way.

Hernaut, (2002) suggests that as industries are in constant need for a consistent and reliable supply of educated and skilled business graduates, universities are expected to produce

graduates that will be able to meet the requirements of the industries. However, universities are found to be lagging behind in this aspect. This same view was equally indicated by some respondents from the executives, of industry who indicated that the University was failing to produce graduates of such a calibre. The respondents went on to suggest that more should be done and indeed it is crucial to ensure that Universities act like wise. The same views as above are highlighted by Nicholson and Cushman's (2000) who also suggest that there is a gap between the knowledge, skills and qualities that University graduates possess and the knowledge, skills and qualities required by prospective employers. They went on to explain that this gap exists due to the differences in the perceptions between industry leaders and academics. More often than industry expect more from Universities that in most cases will be facing challenges in determining how graduates can match industrial expectations.

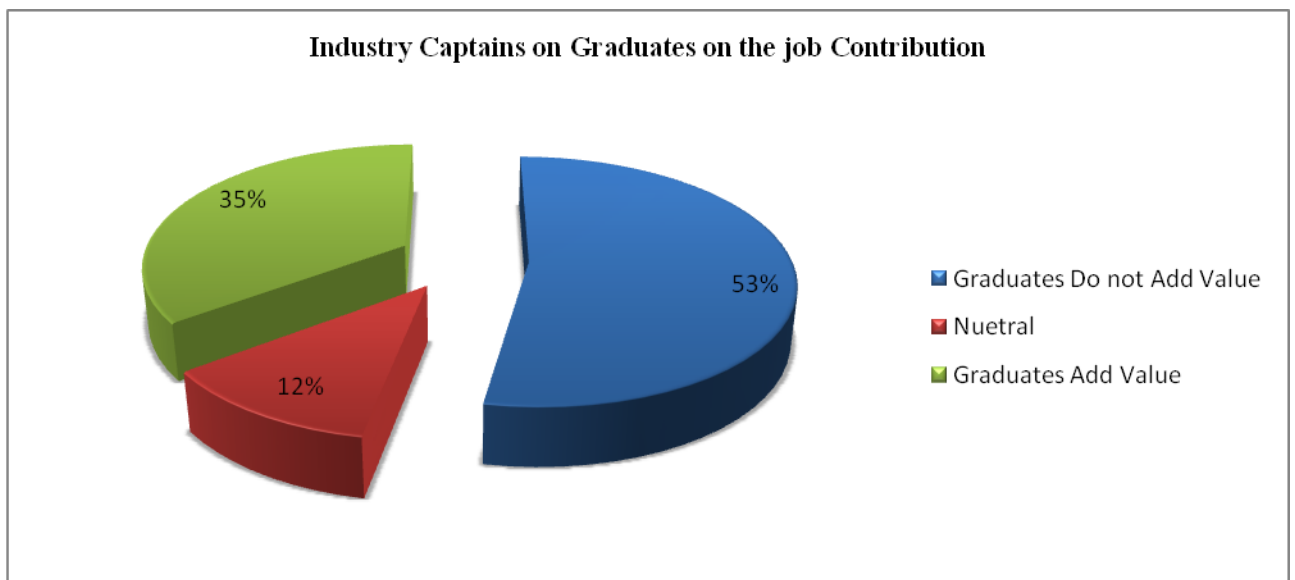
The recent study by Bhanugopan and Fish (2009) found that significant differences existed between students' and employers' perceptions on the importance of certain general business, technical skills and personal attributes which contribute to students' employability in industries in Papua New Guinea. The same challenge that the Zimbabwean universities and industries are facing are not unique to the Zimbabwean situation alone but they are common to a number of countries. Indeed as identified by the lecturers and doctors in the University tremendous efforts are being made by these organisations but the gap may still remain unclosed as it may be difficult for instance in Zimbabwe to design a curriculum that matches the pace of change. This poses a problem as universities are in danger of producing students who lack the skills required by industries. It is thus, essential that the need of industries be ascertained in terms of skills they expect of University graduates as many organizations are now taking into account the abilities of the new recruits in terms of these generic or common skills in their recruitment process and internal appraisal systems (Dench, 1997)

#### **4.11 Industry perceives the contribution and value of University graduates.**

The question on how industry perceives the contribution of University education was asked directly to the 17 executives through a questionnaire. The 17 respondents had mixed feeling towards the value addition of graduates to the business world. Nine (9) executives were of the view that graduates really add value through bringing new ideas that make companies move. Two (2) of these respondents indicated that the contribution of graduates were too important to ignore by identifying that they have new ideas and knowledge that companies do not have

by virtue of being led by the old executives with old ideas that are recycled. One (1) executive suggested that one of the reasons why Zimbabwean organisation are failing mainly parastatals was through the recycling of old ideas that are not in direct link with the changes going on in the labour market and business fraternity.

Six (6) of the executives shared a different view from the above identified executives. They believed that University graduates had little to no contribution at all. One of the six had no kind words as he directly indicated that MSU graduates were the worst of all graduates in Zimbabwean Universities. He identified students from accounts as worse off. He indicated that mass recruitment of students at MSU was a contributing factor indicating that the evaluation process by lecturers was not thorough such that some of these students were coming out raw and half backed. His views were supported by 5 other executives who also lamented over poor and undesirable work ethic from graduates with good grades on paper but being the worst performers. Two of these went on to suggest that most graduates lack the discipline that industry needs. They pointed out that some of them are lazy, while other are too clever to their liking with a bad work ethic. They blamed the curriculum for addressing specific skills and not the discipline side that adds value to industry. Only 12% respondents from the executives were neutral and they never contributed directly as illustrated below.



*Fig 7: Industry captains on graduates on the-job contribution*

To get a fair clarity the researcher through an interview asked lecturers what was their views on the graduate’s employability. Ten (10) lecturers reiterated that graduates in Zimbabwean Universities are generally good as the Universities try by all means to create a linkage between industry expectations and what the University offers. Seven (7) lecturers indicated that students are taught all facets of working life. One (1) lecturer went on to explain that the students are given exposure as a matter of policy at MSU to go for work related learning in companies of their choice. However the lecturer went on to lament that some students due to company closure end up joining the “*museyamwa*” enterprises (making reference to personal business) that lack professionalism and business exposure. These views were supported by the other 9 lecturers who indicated that industry was equally closing and some of the captains of industry lacked good coaching and mentoring skills relevant to ensure that graduates ;learn as intended by the work related learning program.

The Executives’ views on what graduates lack most are summarized in the table below:

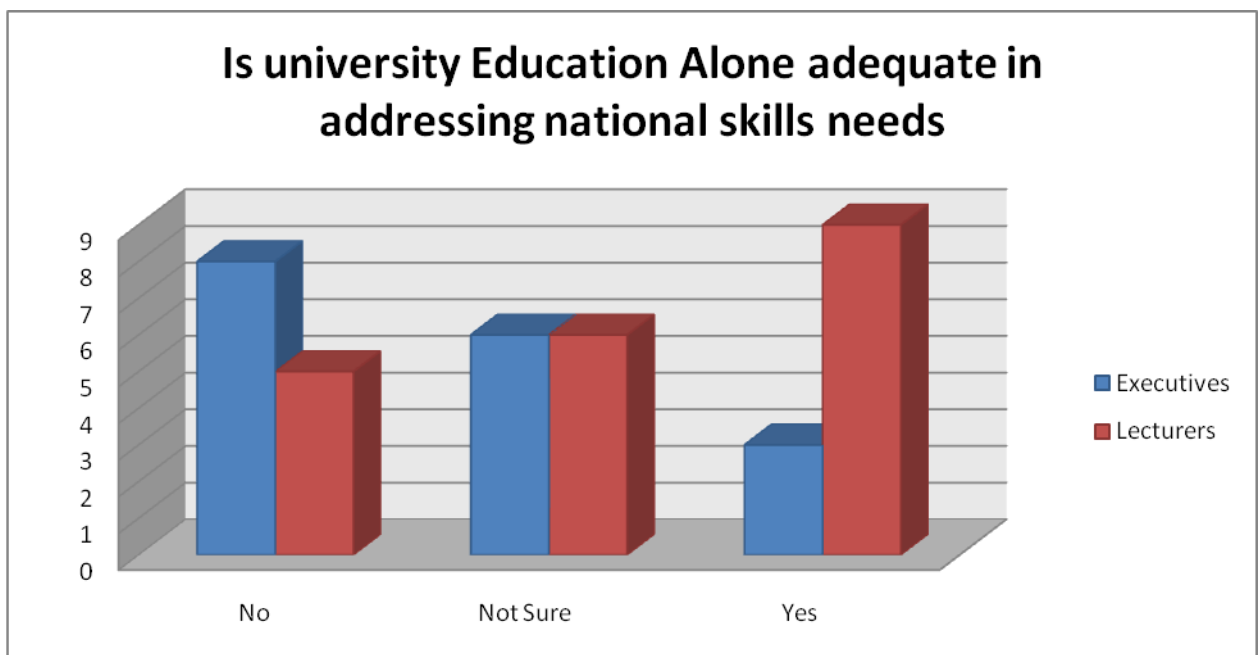
What graduates lack in the recruitment process	NO. OF RESPONDENTS NOMINATING THIS
Practical Appreciation	5
Poor Leadership Skills	2
Problem Solving	4
Business Acumen	3
Conceptualization Skills	3

The researcher in pursuit of better clarity went to ask the business executive the challenge they face in the employability of graduates. Five (5) executives identified lack of practical appreciation of concepts as one element graduates lacked. These 5 indicated that in most cases most graduates from Universities had a good theory base with little appreciation of practical appreciation as compared to graduates from polytechnics. Eight executive went to identify the other challenge as poor leadership skill as a major challenge form graduates. The same views were supported by 3 other senior respondents who unanimously agreed that more should be done by Universities to ensure that the graduates understand leadership. One of the executives went to explain that when graduates join industry they will be valued highly by virtue of possessing the rightful qualifications. As such the respondents further clarified that they then fail to exhibit good leadership skills which makes it difficult for them to give them

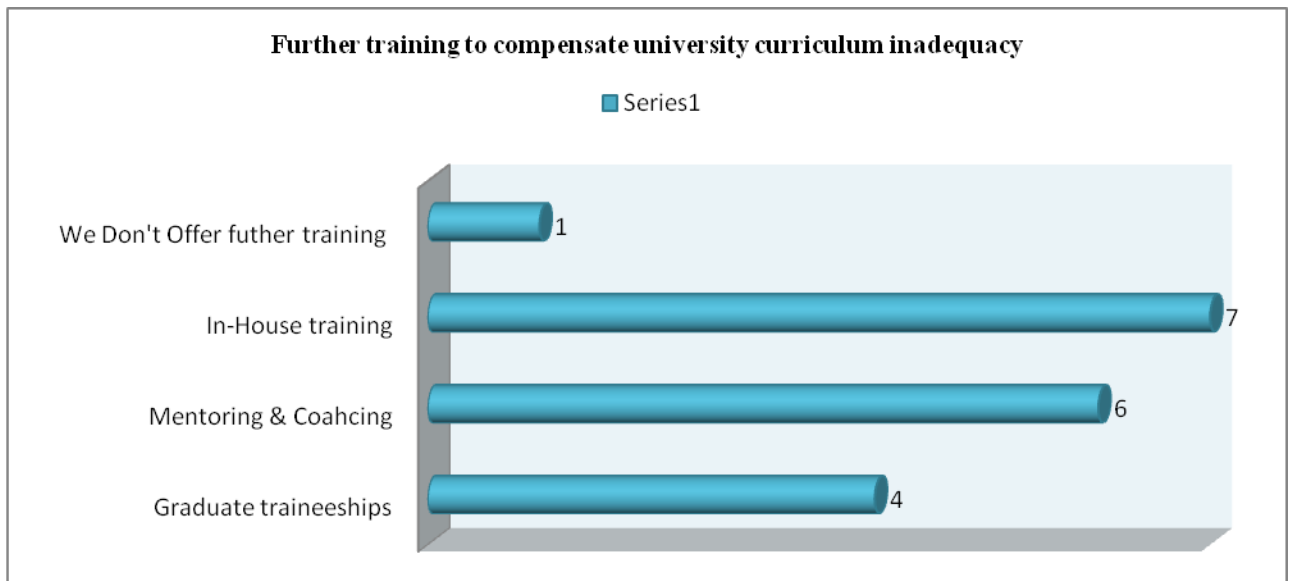


meaningful duties and responsibilities. The other 4 respondents cited lack of problem solving skills as a major challenge. Three (3) other respondents cited lack of business acumen as the major problem that they face with graduates. They reiterated that these graduates lack good conceptualisation skills that enable them to read the business environment.

Both lecturers and executives were asked whether they think that university education alone can address skills needs. Their views are shown in the graph:



Executives obviously disagreed and said their organizations had put in place mechanisms to enhance graduates skills. To compensate for the inadequacy of university teaching four (4) executives highlighted that they offer graduate trainee programmes while six (6) highlighted the use of mentoring and coaching, while 7 said they offer in-house training. Only one indicated that they had no funds to further train graduates hence they just have to learn as they go. The graph below summarizes their views;



#### 4.12 Analysis

Research findings suggest that graduates and executives lament over the concentration of students on core skills and not other related skills. This view is in direct contrast with what Barrie (2004) suggests that graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a University community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. The author went on to suggest that these attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most University courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future<sup>2</sup> Barrie (2004) further suggests that the skills, knowledge and abilities of University graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts. This is an area that is lacking in Zimbabwean University especially those universities that take students in numbers. Failure by lecturers to gauge directly the contribution of each student and address the weakness, results in students focusing on the basic skills and ignoring other related skills that add value.

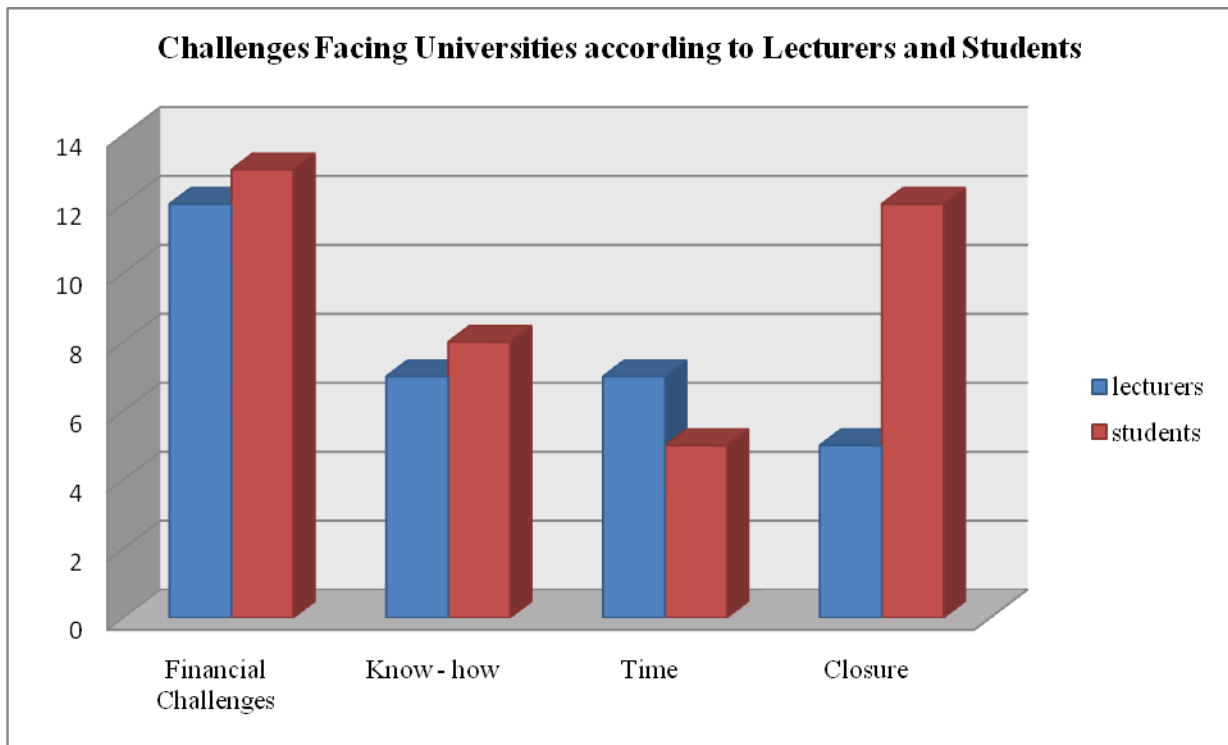
Sawyer (2004) suggest that Universities in Africa are facing a serious shortage of resources, infrastructure and funds for them to engage in a meaningful teaching and operation. From the research findings respondents lamented over poor funding and resource allocation. Obviously with limited funding and poor resource allocation universities end up focusing and channelling little resource towards the most basic and crucial things and ignoring the rest.

This may as well explain the reason why there the students being produced are viewed as of poor quality. Resources are too limited to support all the efforts and initiatives of students in their learning endeavours. If they are not exposed to industrial realities obviously they will be more theoretical than practical and that may have a detrimental effect on how they are perceived by industry.

Harvey (2005) argues that “alignment of higher education with workforce needs should be based on careful action by institutions to embed skills and attributes within instructional programs.” This is true since the skills and attributes gained in class are the ones that are used in the workplace set up. Such skills enable industry to view and perceive tertiary education as one that provides the companies with the lubrication to success. Failure to gunner such attributes will make industry view tertiary education with suspicion and discontent. The above view is supported by Nabi, (2003) who suggest that graduates should focus more on the development of a mix of key intellectual and soft skills in-order to make them more able to compete in the labour market. Indeed the Zimbabwean labour market for instance is full of people with diverse skill, not only from Universities but equally from other small institutions like colleges and professional bodies. Universities should therefore Harness these attributes to increase the employability chances of graduates.

#### **4.13 The challenges faced by Universities in balancing curriculum and industry expectations.**

The researcher through a questionnaire sought to find out the challenges that the University face in its day to day operation. 12 lecturers identified financial challenges as one area that is affecting the quality of graduates and the development of the curriculum. This was also supported by 13 students who also linked financial challenges to resource challenges hence the major drawback to ensure effective learning and mastery. The 13 lecturers reiterated that financial woes were worsening day by day to such an extent that resources were becoming difficult to mobilize, resource to support industry tours, public lecture so as to marry theory and practice. Figure 10 shows the challenges faced by universities as highlighted by students and lecturers.



*Fig: 10. Challenges facing Universities according to lecturers and students*

Seven (7) of the lecturers identified know-how as a major challenge towards effective dissemination. Out of these respondents 1 senior lecturer pointed out that most lecturers that are teaching different programs lack neither industrial experience since the bulk of these lecturers do not have a teaching background nor industrial experience. He went on to clarify that the bulk of lecturers were groomed by the University, with some coming straight from class to also teach others. The respondent suggested that while this was the case the University was making frantic efforts to take such lecturers through a pedagogical study to ensure that they are able to disseminate well. The very fact was also verified by 8 graduates who also identified one of the challenges being lecturers with limited knowledge and experience for both teaching and practice.

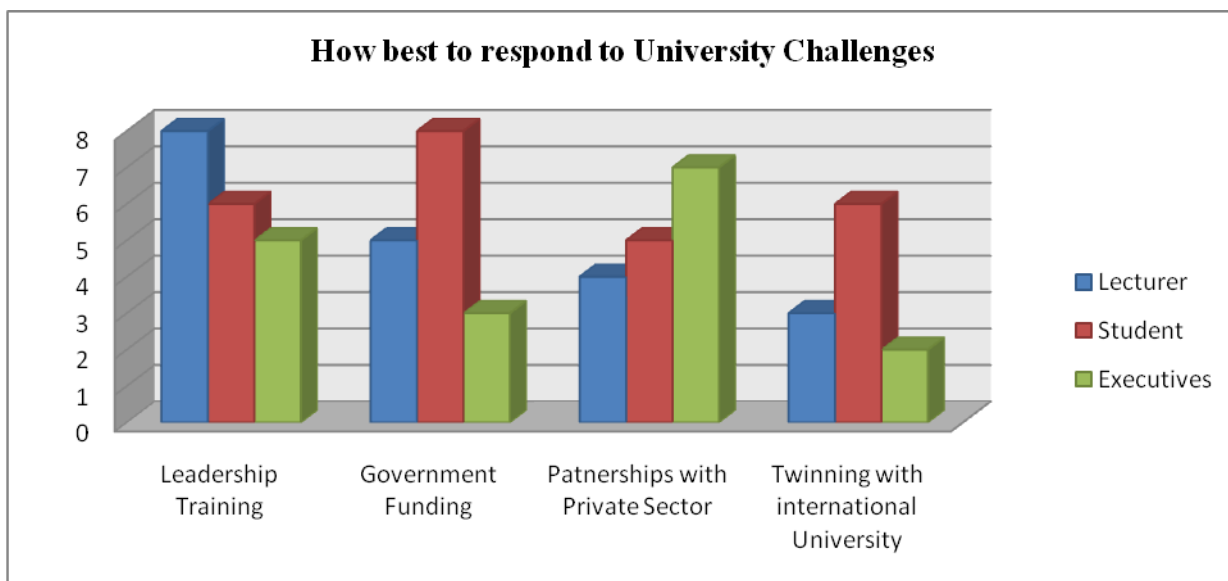
Time was also identified as another major challenge affecting proper dissemination. 7 lecturers indicated that time was limited in terms of the contact hours mainly practical since the University policy suggest that students are on one on one contact with the lecturer for 3 hours a week and 12 hours a month and 36 hours a semester. As a way to get more clarity on time through an interview to graduates the researcher managed to get data from 5 respondents who also lamented over time suggesting that at level 4 the dissertations that are done are done

hurriedly such that they also lack proper time to research and come up a tangle document that will inform both the University and the companies.

The other 8 respondents were of the view that one other challenge that the University faces is failure by industry to support through allowing both lecturers and students to carry out research. One of the 8 lecturers lamented that the only the University can produce good students that are fit for industry is through research. However most papers that are written in Zimbabwe conceal the identities of the companies which affect them and defeat the whole purpose of learning. This was supported by 4 other lecturers who suggested that the very industry that complains about the student is creating closure for research hence the slight challenge in creating a good curriculum. The researcher also asked the graduates about the issue of closure and 12 graduates indicated that indeed industry was not forthcoming in terms of allowing them to carry out research of any value. They cited that closure by companies was a big challenge such that the knowledge being generated by the University was not enough hence the need for industry to open up. One doctor indicated that there should be a synergistic relationship between industry and the University to ensure that the bond translate into tangible and plausible results.

The researcher went on to ask the captains of industry their views on closure. Five (5) managerial respondents indicated that they were aware that industry had a massive challenge to allow and facilitate students to carry out research simply because of some company policies that suggested no information be available to outsiders. Three (3) respondents went on explain that their companies had allowed students to carry out research and no meaningful results had come out of the research. They went on to explain that the researches by student were not value adding as the papers produced lacked substance and they were quick again to blame the supervisors for lacking wisdom to supervise papers.

All the three sets of participants were then asked how best can the university respond to the identified challenges. Figure 11 summarises the responses given by each group.



*Figure 11. How best can the university respond to its challenges*

As shown above the 42% of executives recommended partnerships between the university and the private and public sector organisations, this is the highest percentage per group only 25% of the lecturers argued for these partnerships. Forty percent of the lecturers were more geared towards university leadership training on best practice. The biggest chunk of students called for increased government funding citing the astronomical tuition fees. Another way to respond identified was twinning or partnering international university just as cities do this allows MSU to keep abreast with best practice and receive donations from these university.

#### **4.14 Analysis**

Barnett, R. (2000) suggests that the employability initiative has worked to tackle graduate attributes from an employability perspective within local and pan-institution projects. The author went on to suggest that the work on graduate attributes is linked not just to employability, but to all aspects of the University's student provision and seeks to help the University and its students tackle the challenges of the coming years. Through consultation, this work has produced an inspirational framework of graduate attributes that concurrently allows an overall cohesion and different disciplinary interpretations. This sounds true and going hand in glove with the research findings that suggest that the curriculum is developed

through consultations between industry and lecturers in the universities. Through this interaction and collaboration some of the challenges identified above will be eliminated with ease. As such for successful contribution by graduates to take place there is need to ensure that the interaction between these two constituencies remains solid and platonic.

Interest to note are the views by Gregory, (1996) who suggest that despite some impressive improvements in the performance of higher education institutions, many students still emerge from the education system ill-equipped to meet the challenges of life and employment. The author went on to suggest that today, knowledge and applied intelligence is the key to national survival and success as organizations need “knowledge” workers in order to gain competitive advantage through the application of skills in technology, innovation, production and service. This sound true indeed since the success of the nation is large pinned upon the effectiveness of its educational sector. Tertiary institutions are responsible for producing the think tanks of the nation and as such industry should collaborate very well with such institutions through supporting research and development and availing resources to such institutions. Zimbabwe prides itself as one of the best providers of education and therefore the education should be directed and focused.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter discusses statement of objectives, conclusion of the study, recommendations and recommended areas for further study.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The research sought to assess the adequacy of tertiary education in addressing industry skills requirements Chapter One of the research provided the setting of the study, problem statement and objectives. Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature, while Chapter Three gave an outline of the methodology used. The research findings were presented and analysed in Chapter Four Chapter Five gives the conclusions and recommendations to both the university and future researchers.

#### **5.3 Statement of Objectives**

##### **Objective 1**

To assess how the university curriculum is designed and developed. Data for this objective was gathered from lecturers through questionnaires and managed to demonstrate how the curriculum is designed and developed.

##### **Objective 2**

The research also sought to determine how the curriculum addresses industry expectation given the current economic outlook. Information was gathered from industry captains and the researched managed to clearly delineate the expectations of industry on graduates and their perceptions on current performance by graduates.

##### **Objective 3**

To assess the interface between recruitment requirements and university graduate qualifications. The study obtained data from both students and executives which gave highlighted the different requirements executives want from graduates and how graduates



seem themselves. The questionnaire also gave executives a voice to air their concerns on the calibre of graduates

#### **Objective 4**

To determine how industry perceive the contribution and value of university graduates the study relied heavily on data provided by senior executives which gave precise viewpoint from industry captains on how graduates are performing.

#### **Objective 5**

To assess the challenges faced by universities in balancing curriculum and industry expectations, the research relied on data gathered from both lecturers and students to capture precisely the challenges faced by universities.

### **5.4 Conclusions**

The paper sought to determine the link between the University curriculum and industry expectations through determining how the Zimbabwean industries view the unique contributions of Universities to their needs and expectations. The research findings reveal that Universities are trying their level best to produce graduates that are of a significant value and value addition. Despite facing an array of challenges Universities are trying their level best to ensure that quality students are produced in their numbers. The curriculum is designed through effective involvement of a number of stakeholders but mainly the involvement of industry is not in any way questioned.

However, the majority of industry captains still have reservations about the both the quality of graduates and the effectiveness of education in general. The majority of industry captains' representatives believe that recent graduates lack the appropriate work skills and exposure and do not add value. To this end many organisations offer further training to university graduates whom they employ. These further trainings are seen as a way of improving the interface between recruitment and graduate employability.

The research also noted that lecturers and student agree that universities still face challenges are fulfilling their mandate. Chief among the identified challenges is the issue of inadequate funding.

### **5.5 Recommendations to the University**

1. The University through its public relations office or research desk should create synergy with industry through signing memorandum of understanding, cooperation and partnerships, as a way of getting full feedback from industry concerning graduates performance and facility for a research platform.
2. The University should increase its visibility through public lectures, seminar since this will allow students and lecturers to have a better appreciation of practice than to focus on bookish aspects of learning.
3. The University should ensure that students are attached in companies that give the best learning other than just let them get attached to some other dubious companies where there is limited value addition and generation of knowledge.
4. It is also recommended that the university makes use of part-time lecturers who also senior executives so that they can share their practical experiences with students
5. It is further recommended that the university explores other methods of teaching such as case studies, public lectures by industry captains and other methods which help bring the practitioner and the learner close together.

### **5.6 Recommendations to the Students**

1. University graduates should strive to equip themselves professional by undertaking self development programmes mainly industry accepted professional courses such as IPMZ, CIS, CIMA etc
2. There is need for graduates to make use of the vacations periods (in addition to the mandatory industrial attachment) to gain valuable work experiences
3. Graduates must help in determining industry needs and give feedback to the University. In most cases when they finish that is the end. They should be

members of different societies in the University through alumina. This will give both the lecturers and students an insight on what industry expects.

### **5.7 Recommendations to Industry**

1. Industry must be forth coming when it comes to research for both lecturers and their students. The research established that industry is a bit reluctant to privacy and confidentiality policies to avail information to researcher yet curriculum is designed to meet the demands of industry that can only be revealed through massive research.
2. Industry needs to take a more collaborative or partnership approach with universities as they are the users of the skills produced by universities

### **5.8 Recommendations for future research**

1. It is recommended that future research of this nature be extended to cover private sector organizations as they have different needs and expectation from graduates.
2. It is also important to widen the net to cover more Universities to enhance generisability and conformability of research findings.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE (Lecturers)**

(Please tick the applicable in the box)

**Faculty**  Arts/Social Science  Commerce  Science & Tech

**Gender**  Male  Female

**Age**  25-35yrs  36-45 Yrs  46-60 yrs

**Education**  Degree  Masters  PHD

**Years of service with the University**

1- 5  6 – 10  11 – 15  16 – 20  20+

1. How is your curriculum developed?

Benchmark with other Universities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student on attachment feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2. When was the last time you reviewed you curriculum?

Last year     
  2yrs ago     
  3yrs ago     
  4yrs ago     
  5yrs ago

3. What occasioned such a review?

<b>Student Complaints</b>	
<b>Industry complaints</b>	
<b>University policy</b>	

.....

.....

4. Who is involved in the curriculum review process?

<b>Student &amp; Lecturers only</b>	
<b>Lecturers only</b>	
<b>Lecturers &amp; Employer Reps</b>	
<b>ZIMCHE</b>	
<b>All of the above</b>	

.....

.....

.....

5. May you state the constituents you consider to be key stakeholders to the university

<b>Students</b>	
<b>Employers</b>	
<b>Parent Ministry</b>	
<b>ZIMCHE</b>	
<b>All of the above</b>	

.....

.....



6. Are you aware of your Stakeholder’s expectations of you as a skills provider?

NO		Some		Yes	
----	--	------	--	-----	--

.....  
 .....

7. Do you think that your curriculum is adequate and relevant to industry needs and expectations, please explain your answer

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	----------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

.....  
 .....

8. How does your department prepare its students for employment

<b>Industrial Attachment</b>	
<b>Public Lectures by Practitioners</b>	
<b>Lectures are adequate</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

.....  
 .....  
 .....

9. Do you agree with the view that “graduates are too theoretical without practical appreciation?” Kindly explain your answer

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	---------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

.....  
 .....

10. What are the follow-up mechanisms in place to track how your students are received in industry,

.....  
 .....

11. What challenges do you face in developing and maintain a relevant curriculum

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>Time</b>	
<b>Know-how</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

.....  
 .....

12. In your opinion what do university graduates lack most

<b>Practical appreciation</b>	
<b>Leadership skills</b>	
<b>Technical ability</b>	
<b>Personal management</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

.....  
 .....  
 ....

13. Do you think university education alone can address the country’s skills requirements, if not what would you recommend

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
--------------------------	--	-----------------	--	----------------	--	--------------	--	-----------------------	--

.....  
 .....

14. Outside the lecture rooms what other activities do you offer students to enhance their employability.....

.....  
 .....

15. If you had the chance, what changes would you make to improve the employability of graduates.....

.....  
 .....

16. Any other Comment

.....

.....

.....

.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE (Graduates)**

.(Please tick the applicable in the box)

**Position**  Graduate Trainee  Attachee  Permanently employed

**Gender**  Male  Female

**Age**  20-25yrs  26-30 Yrs  31-40 yrs

**Field**  Finance/Admin  Engineering/Sciences  Social  Other

**Years of service with the organisation.**

2- 2  3 - 4  5+

17. Prior to your current employment had you ever been formally employed, if yes where

<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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18. For how long were you employed there?

One year  2yrs  3yrs  4yrs  5yrs

19. In your current job do you feel that you were adequately prepared through university learning alone

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
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20. What on the job challenges do you face?

<b>Practical application of theory</b>	
<b>Lack of supervisor support</b>	
<b>Unclear job roles &amp; expectations</b>	
<b>Inadequate tools of trade</b>	
<b>Improper job induction</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

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21. Since joining your current employer, have you received any further training? If so in what areas

<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
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22. Do you feel your current job matches your university qualification or you simply took up any job

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
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23. Would you settle for any job which requires a lesser qualification than a degree or a job in a different field altogether, please explain

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
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24. How best do you think the university can respond to the challenges?

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25. Is there any channel for formally communicating with the university on issues of curriculum development and change?

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26. Either as a former student or then as a student did you have an input in the way the curriculum was developed and delivered

<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
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27. Given your experiences do you think that the university curriculum is adequate and relevant to industry needs and expectations, please explain your answer

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
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28. Would you consider your work-related learning year as adequate experience for industry

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29. As a job seeker, what challenges did you face

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30. Are there any follow-up mechanisms in place to track how your students are received in industry, if so kindly state these mechanisms?

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31. In your opinion what do university graduates lack most.....

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.....

32. Do you think university education alone can address the country's skills requirements, if not what would you recommend

<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>		<b>agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	
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33. If you had the chance, what changes would you make to improve the employability of graduates.....

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34. Any other Comment

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**QUESTIONNAIRE (Senior Executives)**

(Please tick the applicable in the box)

**Position**  Director  HOD  Middle Management

**Gender**  Male  Female

**Age**  25-35yrs  36-45 Yrs  46-60 yrs

**Education**  O /A Level  Certificate/ Diploma  Degree  Masters

**Years of service with the organisation.**

3- 5  6 – 10  11 – 15  16 – 20  20+

35. Do you have a recruitment policy in place ? YES / NO

36. What specific attributes does the policy look in a job applicant

Technical ability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership potential	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business acumen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

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37. Do you have any challenges in filling vacant posts, if so kindly state the challenges you are referring to

<b>Not at all</b>		<b>Sometimes</b>		<b>Always</b>	
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38. In case of a vacancy do you always recruit internally or go externally? What is the justification for each choice

<b>Motivating internal staff</b>	
<b>Its cost effective</b>	
<b>Organisational Policy</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

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39. What key skills and competencies do you look for in a graduate?

<b>Intuitiveness</b>	
<b>Creativity</b>	
<b>Problem solving</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

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40. In your functional area are you aware of university curriculum for graduates recruited in your department, if so how did you become aware of such curriculum

<b>Not aware at all</b>		<b>I have some idea</b>		<b>Yes I am aware</b>	
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41. In your opinion what do university graduates lack most

<b>Practical appreciation</b>	
<b>Leadership skills</b>	

<b>Business acumen</b>	
<b>Problem solving</b>	
<b>Other specify</b>	

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42. Do you think university education alone can address the skills requirements of your organisation/industry, if not what would you recommend

<b>NO</b>		<b>Not sure</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
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43. Do you have prefer graduates of a particular university over any other university, if so why

<b>NO</b>		<b>Not really</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
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44. If you had the chance, what changes would you make to improve the employability of graduates

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45. Would you say there is a skills gap in Zimbabwe? If yes please explain

<b>Not aware at all</b>		<b>I have some idea</b>		<b>Yes I am aware</b>	
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46. What types/forms of further training do you offer to graduates and why

<b>Graduate Traineeships</b>	
<b>Mentorship/Coaching</b>	
<b>In-house workshops</b>	
<b>We don't offer any</b>	

<b>Other specify</b>	
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47. Any other Comment

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & PATIENCE**