MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

AN ASSESSMENT ON THE ROLE OF UNIVESITIES IN PURSUING THE UNITED NATION'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL No 4. THE CASE OF MSU

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF ARTS HONOURS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

JUNE 2018

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Midlands State University

for acceptance as a dissertation entitled: An assessment on the role of universities in pursuing the

United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal No. 4. The case of Midlands State University.

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Signature of Supervisor   **Date**

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DECLARATION

I , Armstrong Mudzengerere Registration Number R145104Y declare that the dissertation submitted to Midlands State University is my personal work and l have not previously submitted it, in its entirety or in part to any academic institute.

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Signature

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Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to   my mother Mrs. Edith Mudzengerere, my sole guardian. I appreciate her sacrifice, encouragement, unwavering commitment, spiritual and continued moral support throughout my tertiary tenure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this study could have been impossible without the moral and material support from various people. Therefore, it is my obligation to extend my utmost gratitude to them

My gratitude goes to my supervisor Ms. MUKUHLANI for her patience, excellent academic guidance, wisdom and insight into my research.

I am momentously appreciative to Mrs. Munondo who conferred me with enormous communication skills, insight and confidence on how to research my thesis, assisting me in booking appointments to carry my interviews. I am grateful for her dedication, accessibility and professional advice.

My passionate gratitude goes to my brothers Elvis and Learnmore Mudzengerere for helping me throughout my educational pathway.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of universities in pursuing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, which is on the need to ensure equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all using the case study of Midlands State University. The study takes note that equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all is the premise, prudent hallmark to sustainable development and an ideal thread towards the realization of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals .In Zimbabwe Sustainable Development Goals are being implemented under the auspices of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation. To analyze this, the study focused on the three variables of SDG4 which are equitable quality education, inclusive quality education and lifelong learning. The study adopted the mixed research method which included in- depth semi structured interviews, participant observation, secondary sources, and open ended and closed ended questionnaires being used as data collection instruments. A mixture of purposive and quota sampling was employed in selecting respondents to inform the study. Study results revealed that Midlands State University since the ratification of the 2030 agenda has embedded inclusive quality education through provision of facilities like the Disability Resource Centre , operationalized equitable quality education through the decentralization policy primed through the multi campus system and has invoked innovation hubs as strategies to expedite lifelong learning to increasingly gravitate towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goal No. 4. The study then proceeds to give conclusions pertaining to the research questions and variables before suggesting recommendations on how the university can continue to aid and abet the implementation of SDG 4.

ACCRONYMS

EFA   **Education for All**

SDGs   **Sustainable Development Goals**

SDG4   **Sustainable Development Goal 4**

MDGs   **Millennium Development Goals**

MDG2   **Millennium Development Goal 2**

MSU   **Midlands State University**

UNESCO   **United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization**

UN   **United Nations**

UZ   **University of Zimbabwe**

ICT   **Information Communication and Technology**

SDEQA   **Standards Development and Quality Assurance**

OWG   **Open Working Group**

OECD   **The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development**

ZIMCHE   **Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education**

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CHAPTER ONE:

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

1.1 Introduction

Higher and Tertiary Education systems are faced with intractable tensions between demands of quality, equity and funding. After decades of skepticism surrounding the need for low income countries to invest in higher education there is now a widespread acceptance of the relationship between higher education and development Unterhalter Carpentier (2010), McCowan and Scendal (2016). For the past 15 years the development agenda has been driven by Millennium Development Goals which included no reference to higher education but with the Sustainable Development Goals replacing the MDGs this has implied a crucial and cross cutting role for universities through a specific standalone goal. Sustainable Development Goal 4 entails the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes life-long learning opportunities for all. Thus designed to provide a route to sustainability the goals are noticeably tackling critical deprecatory problems in the world and for the African continent from ending poverty to achieving social inclusion and equitable quality education. The way the MDGs targets were elucidated made it flinty for African countries to progress. The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development clearly reflects the need to promote Education for Sustainable Development through this, universities like Midlands State University as the focus of the study can provide relevant learning environments, andragogy's that empower and provide inclusive, equitable quality education. Globally the SDG phenomenon has gained traction with Scandinavian countries toping the SDG Index of 2016 with Sweden ranked 1st with a score of 85.6%, in Africa Algeria is ranked 64th with a score of 68.8%, in Southern Africa South Africa is ranked 108 with

a score of 61.2% and Zimbabwe is ranked 121 with a score of 56.1%. The SDG Index shows where countries stood regarding fulfilling and implementation of SDGs and it helps countries to set their priorities Sachs et al (2016).

In Zimbabwe the higher education sector is a key stakeholder in pursuing SDG realization thus it became plausible and essential that a research about the role of universities in pursuing the realization of SDGs through goal 4 be conducted so as to provide information on how this sector in Zimbabwe is embracing and implementing the agenda through what they are doing and ought to do, as questions have arisen of how better can this stakeholder support this agenda essentially in Africa. With education being formulated as a standalone goal, being the premise, bedrock of SDGs, it has a de facto role as a means of attaining all other SDGs and an enabler through institutions that proffer education. To grasp the role of universities in pursuing the realization of SDG 4 focus was put on key determinants of campus service delivery and facilities that delineate quality education such as disability mainstreaming, multi stakeholder engagements, provision of sports , extracurricular activities, gender mainstreaming, sensitivity in infrastructure and instructional material, information communication and technology based andragogy and the effect all these have on inclusive, equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning. All these will be discussed and classified under 3 concepts of SDG4 which are inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning. It is upon these clusters that the goal will make visible the understructure role of universities in pursuing the United Nations SDG 4 and depict how education runs the ideal path to the realization of all Sustainable Development Goals. With the SDG phenomenon extant this study will provide an analytical platform on how best the university can continue to improve in ensuring inclusive, equitable quality education.

1.2 Background

Zimbabwe, like most other United Nations member states participated in the global discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development Agenda Process. Zimbabwe 's participation started in the Rio+20 Conference whose Outcome Document the "Future we want" gave birth to the Open Working Group which was mandated to prepare the SDGs United Nations (2015). The process began in March 2013 and ended in July with 13 sessions from 14-18 July (2014), when the OWG came up with its outcome document in June 2012. The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil produced the outcome document "The Future We Want "which led to the establishment of an Intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) to put together a set of post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly adopted the SDG's as the basis for the post 2015 Development Agenda. In January 2015 the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Negotiation process to produce the Post 2015 Development Agenda was done in July / August 2015 and it produced the Post 2015 Development Agenda entitled "Transforming Our World the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The General Assembly met and adopted "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" a set of Universal, Transformative Goals and Targets in the Economic, Social and Environmental sectors that seek to eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere and recognize that its eradication is the greatest global challenge facing humanity and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

The development architecture has 17 Goals and 169 Targets. United Nations (2015) opines that although global in nature and universally applicable, these goals will be implemented in individual member states taking into account the different national realities, capacities and levels of development while respecting national policies and priorities. Goals and targets will be

implemented within each country's national planning process, policies and strategies, visions and models. According to the Ministry of Macro-Economic Planning and Investment Promotion in coming up with its position on SDG's, the Zimbabwean Government undertook a wide consultation process which entailed multi-stakeholder workshops and several follow up meetings. Stakeholders involved included UN Agencies, Civil Society, Academia and other Development Partners. However, in terms of focus and taking into account the above guidelines, the government decided that it will focus on the following 10 SDGs:

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development;

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; and

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The superseding principle in terms of the Means of Implementation is that as stated in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, governments alone (especially in the developing world) will not be able to implement the SDG Agenda on their own. The key partners will be involved in the financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs and these include: Government (national and sub-national structures); Development Partners; Youth organizations, organizations representing People Living with Disabilities, Universities and the general citizenry. Providing a sound resource envelope for these goals is the higher education sector in Zimbabwe. The Post-2015 Development Agenda is being implemented within the National Development Plan, Zim Asset, and its architecture which consists of 4 core Clusters and 3 enabling Sub-clusters. All the SDGs have been integrated into these clusters for ease of implementation and ensuring synergies between the SDGs and the country's economic blue print the Zim Asset. The Ministry of Macro economic planning is spearheading the implementation of the agenda. SDG 4 is being implemented under cluster 4 of Social Services and Poverty Reduction.

1.2.1SDG 4

According to the United Nations (2015) the process of developing the SDG goal 4 culminated in the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization 's Incheon Declaration of 2015. The Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment of the education community to Education 2030 which presents the future of education that informed SDG 4. The title of the Declaration Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning for all reflects the renewed efforts by UN and the international community at large to ensure that all communities benefit equitably from education and lifelong learning opportunities.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2015) avers that as a global education agenda, SDG4 differs from both the education-related Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG 2) and from Education for All (EFA) in scope, geographical coverage and policy focus.

❖ **Scope:** MDG2 focused on children having access to primary education whilst the EFA aimed at 'meeting the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults. SDG4 therefore aims to pursue this unfinished education agenda, but it goes beyond through committing all countries to ensure equal opportunity in access to quality learning opportunities at all levels of education in a lifelong perspective.

❖ **Geographical coverage:** With its narrower scope on ensuring children's access to, and completion of primary education, the geographical coverage of the MDG 2 was focused on low-income and conflict-affected countries in the Global South whilst the EFA was focused on countries where the proportion of children out-of-school was the greatest. SDG4, on the other hand, is, by definition a universal agenda applicable to all countries both in the global North, as well as the global South.

❖ **Policy focus:** MDG 2 concentrated on access to, and completion of, primary education, the EFA was concerned with access to quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. SDG4 continues the EFA 's focus on quality basic education for all and broadens the agenda further to include concern for equitable access to post-basic education and training for youth and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning opportunities.

In addition, UNESCO (2017) reveals that the MDG 2 has since been escalated in the 2030 agenda and it has been expanded to the full spectrum of education through Goal 4 which recognizes the importance of higher tertiary institution to sustainable development. Some of the targets within this goal are explicitly calling for action by universities as some of the targets have a direct relevance to the learning, teaching activities within universities such as the need to eliminate gender disparities in education, the need to build and upgrade education facilities that are, disability and gender sensitive to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. It is against this backdrop that this research will unearth the role of this stakeholder in pursuing SDG4.

1.2.3 Higher Education (Universities)

 According to Zimstat (2012) Zimbabwe has 15 registered universities. Formal higher education was first introduced into Zimbabwe, then Southern Rhodesia, in 1957, with the establishment of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which initially enrolled 57 students Shizha, (2011). The university later changed its name to the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) when the country gained independence in 1980. There was only 1 university at Independence in 1980 with the rest being established from 1991 to 2010. Nherera (2000) writes that at independence in 1980 the new government embarked on a massive expansion of educational provision to address historical imbalances and promote socio economic development. According to the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education act (2006) by 2005 they were 14 universities and their development was strengthened by the establishment of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education ZIMCHE in 2006 to register and accredit higher education institutions.

Midlands State University being the focus of the research was established in 2000 under the April 1999 Midlands Act in Gweru and the idea of a university dates back to the foundation of

the National University of Science and Technology. The university facilities were originally at Gweru Teachers College but it has since been expanded to several campuses with Batanai, TelOne Graduate School of Business Administration and Law and the Gweru main campus being classified under MSU Gweru. The multi campus concept has led to the establishment of Zvishavane campus in the Midlands province and it came into official use in 2015. Other multi campuses are in Mutare, Kwekwe and Harare. It is also imperative to note that the quality standards at the university have to be in conformity with the provision of the Standards Development and Quality Assurance (SDEQA) as set by the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education of Zimbabwe. To try to assure equitable, inclusive quality provision the institution has gone apace and established a department for quality control entitled the department of Quality Assurance and Learning.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The 2030 agenda recognizes the momentousness of education as the cornerstone of sustainable development through SDG 4 which calls for the "need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all". With education and research being explicitly and unequivocal in a number of SDGs , universities like Midlands State University as the focus of the study have a direct role towards their realization and arguably the 2030 agenda will not be achieved without this sector. Midlands State University as a complex, diverse institution with its broad remit around the creation, dissemination of knowledge and its unique position within society is critical in pursuing SDG realization. For the agenda to be successful at both the global and local scale universities need to become key proponents and vigorous advocates of sustainable development, therefore the researcher aimed to unearth this

unknown aspect of how Midlands State University is integrating, implementing , embedding and pursuing SDG 4 through its core function , within its strategies, policies, plans ,extensive learning , teaching activities , co-curricular activities , student clubs and its learning environment in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all which depicts SDGs implementation ,the involvement and role of universities in pursuing the United Nation's SDG4.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The main immutable variable under discussion is the role of MSU in ensuring inclusive equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all and the theoretical springboards that fit perfectly into this research include the Transformative education theory propounded by Mezirow in the late 1900s and the Cognitive democratic theory of education by Knight (1999).

Cognitive Democratic Theory of education coined by Knight (1999) merges inclusive education and social inclusion within broader epistemological principles. Knight (1999) described educational change and social change as mutually interrelated processes. The theory is in tandem with the 'Leave no one behind principle' which is guiding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This theory is applicable to the study at hand as it shall be used to depict and explain how inclusive institutions beget inclusive societies which is vital in achieving sustainable development. According to the World Bank (2013) conversely institutions especially those with broad mandates can contribute to inclusiveness and equitability in many different areas as well as in the society as they are critical in fostering inclusiveness through their actions. Therefore, with such sweeping scope and reach universities are fundamental in

determining whether a person is excluded or included from development. Institutions can be detrimental to progress as they can potentially infringe upon rights and entitlements thus undermining access to resources and services United Nations General Assembly (2015). This view is supported by Branisa and Ziegler (2015) who conquer that promoting inclusivity and equitability has been recognized as a priority for development for a long time and it is a pre-requisite for the success of the agenda.

Transformative Learning this theory was developed by Jack Mezirow in the late 1900s. He used this theory to describe how people develop and use critical self-reflecting to consider their beliefs and experiences, and over time, change dysfunctional means of seeing the world. Mezirow views Higher Education as drivers that facilitates growth and development in learners for emancipation purposes. Transformative learning also describes processes necessary to transform assumptions, concepts, values and practices. Mezirow describes transformative learning as learning that transforms problematic frames of reference and assumptions to make them more inclusive, reflective and open. Through their education, research, and operations roles, higher education institutions (HEIs) create a societal impact that shows a strong potential to act as leverage point for sustainable development locally and globally (Sedlacek, 2011). Therefore, in reference to this theory its applicability protrudes from the notion that the transformative approach conceives that the main purpose of education is addressing inequalities and injustices that are embedded in the large society. A transformative approach brought by higher education values in education depict liberatory and critical capacities that can drive fundamental social change writes Maclure et al (2009). Thus, it is among higher education's responsibility to build competences for sustainable development among students (Wiek et al., 2011) as well as among university educators to empower them to become leaders for sustainable

development (Mader, Scott, Razak, 2013). SDG4 embeds a target of ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills needed to promote sustainable development, sustainable lifestyle, human rights, gender equality and appreciation of cultural diversity which depicts how the goal conflates with transformative objectives of higher education as propounded by Mezirow.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs were unanimously adopted as Resolution 70/1 Transforming our World: 2030 agenda for sustainable development with 17 goals which aim to mobilize global effort to end poverty, foster peace, safeguard the rights and dignity of all UN General Assembly (2015). They are defined as comprehensive, far reaching, people centered set of universal and transformative goals which are committed to achieving sustainable development in 3 dimensions economic, social and environmental in a balanced integrated manner in order to address the unfinished business of MDGs.

Higher Education

Universities can loosely be defined as institutions that provide post-secondary education. According to the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act (2006) it defines higher tertiary institution as institutions that provide higher education. An Institution of higher education, according to the Act, means:

- a public or private university or university college and its associate or affiliate institutions; or

- an arm of a foreign institution of higher education that awards degrees

According to the World Bank (2017) there are 200 million higher education (universities) students in the world, with higher education being instrumental in fostering growth, inclusivity, reducing poverty and shared prosperity. The economic reforms from higher education graduates are the highest in the entire education system with 17% increase in earnings as compared to 10 and 7 % for secondary and primary education respectively.

Concepts of equitable, inclusive, quality education

- Inclusion means all people irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, language, migrants, indigenous people, religion as well as persons living with disability should have access to resources and entitlements. UNESCO (2016).

- Equitable means all girls, boys, men and women should have the equal, fair treatment where comparable conditions exist UNESCO (2016).

- Quality Education according to UNICEF (2000) many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. Quality education includes: Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, supported in learning by their families and communities; environments that are safe, protective and gender-sensitive, adequate resources and facilities; content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life.

Lifelong Learning

The UNESCO Education Strategy (2014-2021) defines the concept as denoting a paradigm shift away from the ideas of teaching and training towards those of learning from knowledge conveying instruction to learning for personal development and from the acquisition of special skills to broader discovery and the releasing and harnessing of creative potential. Lifelong learning also denotes continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment, personal fulfillment through formal and informal learning opportunities Watson (2003).

1.6 Research Aim and Objectives

Aim

The study sought to establish how equitable, inclusive quality education is the golden thread that runs through sustainable development through identifying synergies between SDGs and higher education, as education interfaces with SDGs through goal 4. Thus, this thesis looked at the role of Midlands State University in pursuing equitable and inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all leading to SDG realization.

Objectives

- ▪ To investigate and clarify how MSU has built and upgraded education facilities to promote inclusive quality education.

- To examine and ascertain how the university is eliminating gender disparities in education to promote equitable quality education.

- To examine to what extent current standards and curricula reflect the need to ensure quality education.

- To establish the extent to which the university is ensuring lifelong learning.

1.7 Research Questions

Main research question

1. What are the key determinants of inclusive and equitable quality education at MSU?

Sub-research questions

1. How have the university facilities promoted and encouraged inclusivity in learning?
2. How has the university established trans-disciplinary settings for lifelong learning?
3. What has the university done to address issues surrounding gender disparities in education to promote equitability?
4. What are the perceptions of the university regarding the SDG phenomenon?
5. Do the current education facilities and standards reflect disability and gender responsiveness?

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study is pertinent as it will bring to the fore the practicality of SDG implementation. Directly or indirectly this study will benefit a range of stakeholders but mainly the university and the government. In particular this study will act as an advocacy tool for universities in Zimbabwe as

it will unravel the involvement and the role of universities in pursuing equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all thus depicting the moral imperative to embody SDGs in the university's goals, mission and core functions which is SDGs implementation.

- o ***To Midlands State University***: The study will provide literature, act as a reference point for higher education institutions and students interested in pursuing this area of study. It will also save as a toolkit to help raise the profile of the university as SDGs are a global framework with strong buy in from funders and various stakeholders. The university can benefit by demonstrating university impact in Zimbabwe as this will communicate to external and internal stakeholders how universities in Zimbabwe are contributing to the local wellbeing and relevance of SDGs in Africa. In capturing demand for SDG related education graduates who can understand and implement the agenda will also grow. This study will also build and strengthen the university's collaboration with the government and drive cross disciplinary collaborations /partnership with various stakeholders leading to new funding streams.

- o ***To the Government:*** To the government and of particular interest the Ministry of Finance and the ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion (MEPIP) this thesis will to a greater degree inform them the higher education sector's involvement in embedding and assisting SDG realization through advocacy and communication. As expounded in the Ministry of Marco-Economic Planning and Investment Promotion Zimbabwean Position Paper on SDGs (2016) SDG4 is being implemented under the Social Services and Poverty Eradication cluster of the Zim Asset blueprint, this study will

contribute to the discourse of how best the goal can continue to be aligned to this blueprint and lead to its success.

1.12 Delimitations

Every thesis or study bears finite demarcations. For the purpose of this study with time as a limiting factor, the researcher focused only on SDG4 and two targets relating to higher education which have been aligned with research objectives. The study focused on how universities are providing inclusive equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all which will depict this stakeholder's involvement is realizing SDGs. This study was limited to Midlands State University.

1.13 Thesis Overview

The study encompasses 5 chapters. Chapter one includes the introduction to the study , background , problem statement , theoretical framework, conceptual, framework, research aim, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study and delimitations. Chapter 2 comprises the relationship between the development agenda and universities, a review of the literature on SDG4 variables: equitable quality education, inclusive quality education and Lifelong learning. Chapter 3 engulfs the research methodology , research design , target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection procedures , research instruments and data analysis, Chapter 4 deals with data presentation and analysis. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will review existing literature on the concepts related to SDG 4, relevance of universities to SDGs and the respective objectives of the research. These factors have a direct bearing and reflect the role of the universities in pursuing SDG 4. The factors will be addressed under the subsequent sub headings; equitable quality education, inclusive quality education, quality education and lifelong learning.

2.1 Universities and the Development Agenda

SDG 4 is assuredly not the first principal education development initiative that has emanated globally. UNESCO (2017) posits that internationally education initiatives can be traced as far back to the Declaration of the rights of the Child in 1924. Notwithstanding, the last two decades have eye witnessed the surge of global education initiatives. Preluding with the Education for All initiative in 1990 adopted following the Structural Adjustment programs in the 1980s, then the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on Education for all followed, which was endorsed by 164 governments to revitalize and consolidate education as it pledged to emphasize the importance of educating girls and minority groups United Nations (2015). Following this, in the same year MDG 2 was instituted and the goal intended to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere boys, girls, alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Notable achievements from MDG2 engulf a surge in primary school net enrolment in the developing world from 83% in 2000 to 91% in 2015, 50% decrease in out of school children globally from 100million in

2000 to 57 million in 2015, a global increase in the literacy rates among the youth aged 15-24 from 83% to 91% in 2015 as gap the between men and women lessened United Nations (2015).

Alternatively SDG4 invigorates and augments MDG2 through a holistic, integrated approach which presents a transformative approach to education through echoing notions of education for sustainability. The goal accentuates inclusive, equitable access to quality education which is a monumental improvement over the previous education initiatives EFA and MDG2 which harbored more on education access, enrollment rates contrary to equitable quality education. UNESCO (2015) describes SDG4 as being incentivized and inspired by a humanistic approach to education through education based on rights, social justice, inclusion, shared responsibility, a broad scope ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all and accountability. SDG4 therefore depicts a renewed focus on effective learning through accretion of relevant knowledge, skills, competencies and the relevance of learning for both working citizens, adults and students

Since the overall objective of the research is to assess and identify the role of universities in pursuing the United Nation's SDG 4. The best approach to achieve this, is to also   understand the relevance of universities to SDGs. McCowan and Schendel (2016) reveal that in allotting proficiency, apprehension and solutions that underpin SDG realization universities have a unique function in their operations to drive societal progress and profound transformation towards greater strides for achieving universal education goals. Therefore, universities offer measurable benefits to development agendas like SDGs as they are an ideal focal point to cultivate ideas of sustainability. Universities are an active solution network to help governments and civil society to chart out pathways to successful sustainable development, as they can implement, assess, critique and monitor progress of agendas Sach (2015). To validate this sentiment by Sach (2015) the SDG Compass (2016) notes that universities as centers of excellence can easily encapsulate

Quality assurance as a policy framework, epitomize SDG principles like the "leave no one behind" principle in their institutional operations and governance. Hence besides equipping future and current SDGs rapporteur's, universities can play a cross-sectorial role in embodying, implementation and education of SDGs to other sectors.

In procuring human intellectual resources, initiating sustainable practices on campus and enhancing formal learning with aesthetic components typical to sustainable designs, universities are needed to fulfill the 2030 agenda as they are able to create public awareness of how sustainability can be integrated into everyday life Adriansen (2016). The researcher strongly agrees with this assertion as universities like Midlands State University are innovation centers that can proffer cross sectorial collaboration, dialogues with communities at large about progressive models of development , approaches towards polices and education that can liberate Zimbabwe from a plethora of challenges making them key in pursuing SDG realization.

This therefore necessitates the discussion of the variables below.

2.3 Inclusive Quality education

UNESCO (2016) notes that the underlying concealed issue is the need to relate higher education schooling environments with a wider set of issues and adumbrate mechanism to align educational development with the aim of curbing social inequalities. The continuous effect of educational development defrays and settles some ground for building a consensus towards the agenda of inclusiveness and social justice. Research is needed to manifest and depict how university education has benefited the lives of students with disability as resource allocation must be equitable and the admission process decentralized writes Mwaipopo et al (2011). This

assertion revers how universities must provide positive outlooks to the learning and future of students living with disabilities and other ethnic groups to actuate them to pursue higher education.

Mutanga and Walker (2016) concur that SDG 4 provides an opportunity to ground disability and education in a wider social justice agenda. Universities are therefore needed and vital in counteracting inequalities, recognizing diversity and building institutional capacity to cater for students with special needs and at the same time pursuing educational goals. Chataika (2015) calls for the need to remold policies to ensure disability inclusion, without student living with disabilities having to try to surmount infinite barriers common in universities. In light of the above sentiments the research therefore observes that the elimination of myriad environmental and institutional barriers to inclusion is critical to inclusive quality education as models of service delivery in institutions provide or limit access to services. This clearly reaffirms how key universities are in pursuing SDG realization through institutional development and inclusive quality education, this then necessitates the discussion of the component below.

2.3.1 Disability mainstreaming

Students living with disabilities are oftentimes subject to severe social stigma, exclusion and harassment as they feel like they have to preside over a double workload of their disability and studies Peltzer (2014). Students with disability in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe are to a greater degree more than just a phenomenon, they are a reality. According to Jensen et al (2016) preferably students with disabilities must have admittance to special facilities to expedite and ease their learning. Hence no institution of learning could profess to be of quality if it succors and serves different groups of people in significantly dissimilar ways. Students with impairment/

disability face physical, technological barriers to learning, lack of awareness and poor liaison in institutions of learning Van Jaarsveld and Ndeya Ndereya (2015). Therefore, being subject to this exclusion will inevitably force them to live under the erroneous and misguided belief that their lives are not worthy of respect.

Education institutions should be inclusive and fair to buttress all students to reach their learning potential without either formally or informally presetting barriers or diminishing expectations Field et al (2007). Since students living with disability find themselves in an antithetical conjuncture of rights, liberality and social model of disability, a study by Chataika (2016) reviews that commitments to prioritize equal access to higher education through Disability Resource Centers, adoption of virtual, E learning environment, ramps and universally accessible toilets are solutions to merge and affiliate students with disabilities to augment equal levels of accessibility and inclusion to education. Therefore, the admission, quiddity and peculiarity of disability related equipment at university education facilities will show efforts by universities in pursuing SDG realization through allotting inclusive quality education.

2.3.2 Legibility

SDG 4 as a multidimensional aspirational concept of education, shows a composition of interrelated aspects of quality education which have the prospect of impeding full participation and satisfaction of students at the university campus. Weisman (1981) illustrates that Legibility entails how the environment can be functioned and whether people can understand the environment immediately to explore it without difficulty. Therefore, to keep campus facilities legible easily noticeable buildings, signs, roads, foot pathways and welcoming door spaces can be the most noteworthy variables influencing student social inclusion in learning environments.

Tadesse (2014) conquers that universities are pursuing efforts to construct high quality learning environments that do not only attract huge numbers of students but also increase their retention through meeting the needs and expectations of students through measuring their satisfaction. Hence the university should attempt to mold successful educational personalities by providing more quality education services. Concerning the diversity of student population, the phenomenon of block students and increased number of international student, there is a heightened need for insights on whether students are engaging constructively with the learning surroundings at the university. Thus in this case there is need for a comprehensive plan to prevent creation of a disconnected campus setting and less legible education facilities, as these designs have considerable impact on how students learn.

2.4 Equitable Quality Education

Equitable higher education institutions ensure that the only factors that expound an individual 's access to, engagement in and outcomes of higher education are; an individual's innate ability and study efforts not social circumstances like gender and ethnicity Organization for Economic Cooperation and development (2015). Equitable higher education institutions allot high quality education based on democratic ideals of solidarity, equity and equality regardless of gender and background. SDG 4 focuses on the full spectrum of education and it might be the education needed to rethink the complexity of education approaches that liberate Zimbabwe from a plethora of challenges affecting the country which include lack of equitability in education Kanengoni (2016). Therefore, for a university like MSU to ensure equitable quality education in outcome, retention and access to education, equitability and quality should be inextricably linked

Makamure (2016) argues that SDG 4 clearly addresses the role universities can play in pursuing SDG realization through providing education that counteracts cultural and traditional practices which have invoked and shaped the lack of equity in institutions. Unravelling how universities are and ought to eliminate gender disparity and hegemonic masculinity through transforming university service delivery facilities and administration to genuine equitable quality education will depict how education runs the golden thread that leads to SDG realization. Real augmentations in education will inevitably determine to what extent the rest of SDGs will be realized in Zimbabwe as formal and informal education spaces are not gender responsive lacking the equitable part writes Makamure (2016). This vehement tumultuous appeal requires a reflection on the current nature of equitable quality education in models of delivery at universities (MSU) to deter the role and extent this sector is pursuing SDG realization.

2.4.1 Gender mainstreaming in Programs and Facilities

 Over a protracted period of time gender disparities in higher education have existed in relation to enrolment in mining and minerals processing engineering programs and the environment pertaining to buildings. In Southern Africa women constitute only 40% of students enrolled in mining and minerals processing engineering programs UNESCO (2015). Precedence and prominence of disparities in these programs show a more pervasive phenomenon in Sub Saharan Africa universities. UNESCO (2008) reveals that gender disparities become conspicuous and noticeable at tertiary institutions as numerous practices that show gender disparities are not recognizable due to the clandestine and intangible nature of much of these discriminations. Therefore universities have to prevent gender insensitive andragogy processes and exclusion of women from these career developmental opportunities.

SDG 4 to be transformative and revolutionary for women and girls in their developmental course there is need to urgently implement a feminist pedagogy Chirenje (2016). Through importing equity agendas in campus services universities like MSU will export equity agendas to the rest of the society which inevitably makes the tertiary sector central to pursuing SDG realization. A study carried out by Zeleza (2003) reviewed that gender parity in higher tertiary institutions had been achieved by 2000 in Southern Africa. In Zimbabwe social accountability initiatives like Global Campaigns for education have been successfully delivered to women and girls as substantiated by literacy rates of those aged 15-25 years which have remained at 99% with gender parity during the MDGs period Zimbabwe Interim Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (2015-2018).

The share of women in university enrollment increased from 30.1% in 2000 to 44.1% in 2012 Zimbabwe Position Paper on SDGs (2016). Despite these voluminous increase in women uptake studies by Adriansen and Kanengoni (2016) have reviewed that the most salient conspicuous contestation that has continued to polarize African universities, MSU without exception has been the issue of diversity dimensions in access to and availability of higher education resources equally. This depicts lack of equitable quality education. Murungweni (2016) avers that many African institutions lack feminine hygiene products, sanitary facilities causing women to face obstacles to education. This shows an impediment to equitable quality education. Availability of instructional materials and incinerator facilities for feminine hygiene products is critical to eliminate gender disparities at institutions of higher learning Adriansen (2016). To support this study by Kachambwa (2016) purports that in Zimbabwe gendered status and aspects in relation to equitable quality education has been about limitations brought by insufficient provision of education infrastructure and the resultant long distances students have to travel to access

education. The multi campus system by some universities might be a notable improvement and alternative to the long-distance dilemma of equitable quality education but this remains to be seen.

2.5 Quality education perspective

With much focus of the SDG4 targets chosen for this study being on equitable, inclusive quality education depicted through facilities, the aspect of quality education in service delivery is also a crucial factor emanating from the SDG4 targets in pursuing equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all. Tadessee (2014) views students as key stakeholders of universities and service delivery provision as critical in student satisfaction. In this study provision of health services, transportation, library facilities sport and structured extracurricular activities constitutes service provision from the university.

2.5.1 Extra curricula /Co curricula activities

The Dakar Framework on quality education developed by UNESCO views co curricula, extracurricular activities as a key component of quality education. Studies by Crow & Bolta (2014) revealed that quality education involves structured extra curricula activities like debates, student clubs and sports which impact positively on equitability and social inclusion. Therefore, it is imperative that these activities be made available for all at universities to foster equitable, inclusive quality education. Defined as components of non-academic curriculum by Eccles (2000). These activities are crucial in developing different facets of students as they supplement the curricula. Templeton, Eccles and Kleitman (2002) suggest that existence and participation in extracurricular activities at college is beneficial to the youth as it eradicates gender inequality,

instills sense of belongingness, build leadership skills, provides avenues for socialization, improves grades, education eagerness and diverts students' energies from drug abuse. MSU is no exception having garnered a reputation of gross misconduct in the media, the existence of these activities best saves the institution's reputation and it depicts a critical aspect of quality education which is critical in pursuing SDG realization. The SDG Compass (2016) suggests that students at higher institutions can also set up clubs, activities, campaigns, projects, networks and debates to mobilize behind the SDG agenda.

2.5.2 Health services

Studies by Bashour (2005) have reviewed that health administration is regarded as one of the most indispensable higher education programs necessitating continuous development and improvement. Evaluative attempts in university health services have been primarily focused towards performance but they is need to look at the aspect of students' satisfaction and universal accessibility of all to the services. According to the Accreditation Commission of Higher Education (2012) health services with fully staffed clinics provide an environment where the students feel safe, healthy, and successful academically which fosters a satisfied and committed student. Therefore one of the priorities of college health services should be to emphasize and promote healthy behaviors amongst students. Helping students to manage their sexual health has long been a concern for educational institutions, in the light of a plethora of acute chronic health related issues and sexually transmitted infections being most common in young adulthood American College Health Association (2012). With students engaging in sexual activities, on campus health services and facilities are insurmountable as they help to curb venereal diseases, with early interventions being contributory in that students get back to class as soon as possible

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reducing the lost study time, lectures and yields a higher rate of student satisfaction with the academic environment.

2.5.3 Library facilities

 Crow (2014) opines that universities are power houses gushing forth innovative ideas, creative thinking and library facilities are the pivot of quality education at the institutions. Therefore the library is a crucial hub were students can check out books, conduct researches , find a place to be open minded, at liberty to study and with modern day libraries having overwhelmed their reach to ensure students have access to Wi-Fi services to allow ingress to research websites. Small (2015) avers that accessibility and inclusion are at the core of what libraries are all about, as librarians have an instrumental catalytic role to play in facilitating the full participation of all students. The accessibility and availability of library services is an indispensable indicator of equitable, inclusive quality education at the university. Coskin (2016) posits that accessibility and availability to library facilities is key in playing a remarkable role in the inclusion of all students at college as students give particular importance to academic facilities because they spend a lot of time frequently interacting with the facilities. Hence to develop high caliber graduates MSU must ensure that library services are conducive, available and universally accessible which depicts inclusive quality education.

2.6 Lifelong Learning

Higher tertiary institutions can further research, studying, development and use of new technologies by ensuring the provision of entrepreneurship education, technical studies,

information communication and technology education as programs for lifelong learning UNESCO Institute for lifelong learning (2009). Given the extant, ongoing process of globalization, demographic repositions in Zimbabwe and the instantaneous strides in technological advancements universities, MSU with no exception face a strategic obligatory role of augmenting access to lifelong learning for all. Dunn (2003) avers that lifelong learning at universities covers the formal part of lifelong learning and it enhances social inclusion, personal development, competitiveness and employability. In this globalized age lifelong learning benefits students by sharpening their minds, enhancing confidence, interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and heightening career opportunities.

UNESCO 's Education Strategy (2014-2021) points out that Lifelong learning engulfs meeting the diverse and context of specific learning needs of all age groups including acquisition of basic literacy, technical skills through both formal and informal education pathways to learning. Therefore given the eminence of the lifelong learning concept in SDG4 universities through their structure and initiatives need to mainstream lifelong learning in their transdisciplinary settings. The depressed economic environment, challenged workforce and globalization has intensified the need and demands of learners to retool their capabilities to acquire new competencies Conner (2009). Thus, it is vital for universities to correspond, as technology and innovation apace they should also invest in human capital development for all through lifelong learning courses. Sachs (2016) suggests that entrepreneurship education in higher education plays an insurmountable role in lifelong learning. Entrepreneurship education instills creativity, individual competence and adaptation to the current economic environment.

2.6.1 Information Communication and Technology

The assumption is that internet has become another semblance of infrastructure enabling access to infinite possibilities, new skills, competences, increased networking and self-sufficiency for students. ICT augments the horizon to achieve SDG4 in a lifelong perspective United Nations (2016). Therefore, learning of ICT skills in curricula, ingress to computers for andragogic use and access to ICT resources in learning spaces at universities permeates a huge part of lifelong learning which enhances pursuing SDG realization. The SDG Compass (2016) opines that ICT and access to internet services supports inclusive, equitable quality education by lowering barriers to education through providing tools that can overcome myriad cultural norms. The internet is a safe space were women and girls can explore taboo subjects, access information about their reproductive health. The findings corroborated and were substantiated by the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report (2016) which revealed that ICT bridges the gender gap and bias towards people with disability through provision of distance learning, synergetic and scalable connectivity. Therefore, by streamlining education systems ICT encompasses tremendous diversity and reinforces the SDG principle of "leaving no one behind" through its transformative power to change the nature and quality of education.

2.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter managed to shed light on then literature that was used by the researcher. Discussed in the chapter was the relationship between the development agenda and universities, the SDG4 variables and the subsequent determinants of the variables: Equitable quality education, Inclusive quality education and Lifelong learning. The chapter thus discussed the role of universities in pursuing SDG4

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section will focus on the methodology that was employed and adopted in conducting the study. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the research design employed, tools used to gather information, sampling techniques used, population purposively sampled, reliability, secondary sources, data analysis, validity, research ethics, challenges encountered and improvisations made to ensure that quality data was collected to inform the study. Justification of the choice of the research design, data collection procedures, techniques employed and the target population purposively sampled were also explored and discussed in greater detail.

3.1 Research design

A research design is a strategy that the researcher uses in conducting a study. Blaikie (2000) views a research design as a process that links research questions, empirical data, research conclusions, guides data collection and analysis.

The study adopted and employed the mixed research method. Utilization of both methods was regarded by Haralambos and Holborn (2004) as methodological triangulation. Triangulation is a valuable and widely used strategy Robson (2002) because it examines a research problem from more than one view point so that the study becomes more robust. Triangulation allowed the empirical investigation of the SDG4 phenomenon within the real-life context using different sources of evidence. Qualitatively open ended questions on the questionnaires and in depth semi structured interviews explored the indicators, the university's approach, strategy, policy, service

provision, andragogy (practice of teaching adult learners) and trans disciplinary setting in relation to ensuring inclusive, equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all.. Quantitatively the research examined equitable quality education in relation to procurement in the mining and mineral processing programs and the university's facilities in correlation to accessibility, reliability and responsiveness. This part of the mixed research method enabled the study to be contextual and descriptive. Triangulation as a research methodology ensured that the researcher obtained a holistic, broader perspective and understanding of the role of universities in pursuing SDG 4 realization.

With the SDGs phenomenon extant and ongoing till 2030 it was feasible to use the triangulation paradigm within the exploratory case study design as the exploratory case study design is meant to evaluate specific andragogic initiatives. It is also not meant to produce conclusive information because it aims to develop a better understanding through assessing a phenomenon in a new light Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003). A case study research design focuses on the assessment of a phenomenon, the major entity being analyzed, the case and the subsequent focal point of the study Yin (2003). The phenomenon was pursuing SDG 4 realization, the case is that of Midlands State University, students, faculties, campus facilities, premises and staff members constituted the unit of analysis in the study. Waters (2017) writes that as a phenomenological hypothesis the case study design stresses and focus on the fact that reality is rooted in the perceptions of respondents as co researchers Therefore the focus of the study was assessing the role of universities in ensuring equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all which is SDG 4.

3.2 Target population

Denscombe (2008) defines the target population as the total number of units from which data can be obtained from. The research was conducted at Midlands State University and the target population subject to the study was from its respective campus, premises, students and staff members. These participants' provided essential data that was needed to inform a proper research.

3.3 Sampling technique

A sample is a portion or proportion of the population of interest to the researcher Mason (1996). Without sampling it was impractical for the researcher to survey the entire population as time was a limiting factor. An amalgam of purposive and quota sampling were used in this study, which are non-probability sampling techniques that purposefully selects participants who are relevant to the research and divides the target population into homogenous groups based on certain criterions respectively. Quota sampling enabled the target population to be divided and taken from collective faculties at the institution. The researcher chose the non-probability quota and purposive sampling techniques to ensure the study produces a comprehensive, holistic and significantly unbiased representation of all departments and selects participants who are relevant to the research. The participants were from the Gweru and Zvishavane campus which saved as yardsticks for all the university's campuses. Predefined groups sought after included 15 staff members, 50 (fulltime) students and 10 visiting students from the Arts, Commerce, Social Sciences ,Education, Natural Resource Management and Agriculture faculties which were

purposively sampled faculties because of their direct linkage to the facets of SDG 4 to allow representability. These respondents informed questionnaires and the in-depth semi structured interviews. Utilization of subjective, informed judgment was done to select participants that had the possibility of yielding the most accurate responses to inform the study in order to meet research questions and objectives.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection is a critical component in conducting a research. Defined by Babbie (2010) as procedures and research instruments used to collect information. The study employed the following research instruments; interviews, questionnaires, secondary sources and observations to gather information. Data collection involved collecting and assessing information on the targeted thematic variables in a systematic manner to answer research objectives and questions. The overall intent of data collection was to procure, apprehend information which translated and allowed incontrovertible answers to research objectives and questions. For the purpose of the Questionnaires were preferred because of the nature of the research topic which required the maneuvering of triangulation as a way of collecting data, the number of respondents, easy means to reach student respondents, the ability to conflate closed, open ended questions at once to provide numeric data and qualitative information.

 In depth semi structured interviews allowed comprehensive, exhaustive insight around the SDG-Goal 4 phenomenon and high response rate from staff members as they are highly flexible. Participant   observation though being influenced by the notion that the researcher is an undergraduate student at the institution was crucial and complementary as it validated data gathered from other instruments. The researcher also hinged on secondary sources of data on

literature around the SDG 4 phenomenon in which scholarly views were juxtaposed to data findings to produce an intricate collation and analysis on the role of universities in pursuing SDG 4 realization.

3.4.1 Interviews

In depth semi-structured interviews

The study made use of in depth semi structured interviews which enabled a platform to uncover and promulgate inner perceptions on the SDG 4 phenomenon. Saunders et al (2009) notes that in depth semi structured interviews are an imperative, flexible qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of questions that prompt discussion with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes and responses further. In this exploratory research study in depth semi structured interviews proved valuable as they enabled attainment of valuable information from the context of key informants, use of predetermined questions through an interview guide permeated uniformity in data collection and the nature of the discussions allowed data recording through note taking.

🞢 Key informants

A total of 15 scheduled interviews were conducted with the purposively sampled key informants. These respondents included the MSU Zvishavane Campus director, Executive Dean of Arts, Executive Dean Mining and Minerals Processing, the purposively sampled Faculty Chairpersons, Disability Coordinators, Student Affairs(Deputy Director Sports and Extracurricular activities, Student Coordination), Director for the Center of Quality Assurance Teaching , Learning and Performance Contracting. These key informants enabled the study to assess, examine the university's strategy, policies, and plans to scale up education for sustainable development, how

the university has set transdisciplinary settings for lifelong learning, provision of inclusive quality education and the provision, learning, and use of ICT as an andragogy. Therefore, the strength of the qualitative data collection tool lied in that it allowed the researcher the flexibility to probe information, responses and elaborations to richly inform the study at hand.

3.4.2 Questionnaires

The study made use of questionnaires as one of the primary data collection instruments. Leedy (1993) describes questionnaires as a usual instrument for observing information beyond the physical reach of the observer. A total of 60 questionnaires were purposively allotted to 50 (fulltime) students and 10 visiting students in the sampled faculties. This research instrument was employed as a means evoking information apart from being of inexpensive and it also allowed anonymity which stationed a foundation for confidentiality. A combination of closed ended and open-ended questions were conflated into one questionnaire in which closed ended questions provided the quantitative, numeric data whilst the open-ended questions provided the qualitative information. With the study being administered with exploratory case study in mind, the questionnaires employed in this study were not allotted unsystematically but they were purposively researcher administered and disseminated to level 4 students in the chosen faculties. This was based on the conviction that they have a deeper understanding of the tenets of equitable, inclusive quality education and could proffer relative information based on their experience, since a year after they had begun university education the 2030 agenda was ratified. The questions within the questionnaire were mostly conformed and structured to assess infrastructure, facilities, responsiveness, provision, legibility and accessibility which were in line with the variables and dimensions of SDG 4.

3.4.3 Direct/ Participant Observation

This was a corresponding competence technique employed to validate information garnered from questioners and interviews. Observation involves the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis interpretation of people's behaviors and it is particularly useful for researchers working with in a case study or within their organization Saunders et al (2009). To curtail bias from observation efforts were made to be concealed and inconspicuous during the research. Therefore, as a student at Midlands State University it would be convenient for the research, if the researcher gave an observational perusal of the topic in question. Saunders and Thornhill (2003) argue that, though it has threats to validity, reliability and raises ethical dilemmas through compromising the rigour and objectivity of the research, observation adds considerably to the richness of research data as it is a good way of explaining what is occurring in a particular natural setting. The study site and exploratory nature of the research design warranted the usage of participatory observation to be pivotal.

3.4.4 Secondary Sources

To fully inform the research study, the researcher made use of secondary data sources to increase his understanding on the role of universities in pursuing the United Nations' SDG 4. Robson (2002) views secondary sources as data already collected in some other context and encompasses published literature, reports, secondary case studies, articles, dashboards and journals. For the purpose of this study secondary sources included reading journals, reports, and articles, dashboards on the SDG phenomenon to inform literature review. Secondary data proved to be

instrumental throughout the whole thesis as it allowed defining the conceptual, theoretical frameworks to enrich the study and this was perpetuated by desktop study. Instantaneous strides in Information Communication and Technology has streamlined and simplified the availability of secondary data through search engines.

3.5 Validity

Validity is an essential tool for positivist epistemology. Saunders et al (2003) posit that validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concepts and variables that the researcher is attempting to measure. Key to the validity of this thesis was the representativeness of respondents from various key faculties and departments, as respondents were chosen from each of the identified stakeholder faculties. Pilot testing the interview guides and questionnaires also perpetuated validity. To attain validity inspection from the supervisor and recommendations on research instruments enabled corrections which was also vital in choosing the number of respondents to provide relevant information to inform the study.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy and consistency of the actual measuring instruments Saunders et al (2003). Reliability also entails the extent to which a measuring instrument or a whole study would yield the same outcomes if used on different occasions with the same objectives of the study and with MSU reliability will be depicted in the university's multi campuses which Miller (1986) coined as the similarity of measurements within a given case. Reliability also shows the extent to which results are consistent overtime thus with the SDG

phenomenon ongoing and the study not producing conclusive information reliability on this study can yield the same but improved results as the university is still pursuing this agenda.

3.7 Data collection procedures

In data collection the principal step was to obtain permission from the relevant university authorities in the form of a stamped research introductory letter from the Chairperson of the Department of Development Studies. This enabled the student to go further up the university's administration chain to procure another permission stamp. These procedures were done to avoid conflict of interest, to solicit relevant data from key informants and to ensure that the student is not reproved. This expedited the study through clearing the path to sanction interviews with faculty deans, department heads and requesting appointments with key informants in the top administration of the university. Self-administered questionnaires were then disbursed to the purposively selected students from different faculties to enable comprehensive representability.

3.8 Data analysis

Different methods of data presentation and analysis were used by the researcher. Qualitative data collected through questionnaires, interviews and participatory/ direct observations was evaluated, examined, interpreted and categorized into significant statements which offered a narrative of respective variables subsequently suiting data presentation. To triangulate and buttress findings quantified data from the university and the questionnaire's closed ended questions was analyzed and classified by the Excel spreadsheet. The data was then presented graphically in tables, pie

charts, significant statements, charts and graphs. Data analysis and presentation was therefore done under the auspices of the research objectives.

3.9 Limitations

- o With SDGs being adopted in 2015 literature and published researches focusing specifically on Goal 4 and the role of higher education on the agenda was emerging .This was a constraint and a gap which the research itself will serve to cover in the future.

- o The timeframe allotted for this study to be undertaken combined with the tight academic schedules acted as significant hindrances and limitations to the research due to engagement in academic engagements like lectures and limited time to meet all respondents. To overcome this the researcher managed to come up with time management strategies to schedule researching.

- o Access to vital respondents in high offices was cumbersome due to the need for appointments and the officious nature of institutions which limited acquisition of needed data. The researcher strived to create a conducive environment for the offices to give information and resorted to booking appointments to overcome the above challenge.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

- To circumvent plagiarism borrowed data was referenced.

- The researcher shall not falsify/ fabricate the thesis.

- Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured to participants and the university 's information through privacy attained by use of pseudonyms Schutt (2009).

- The researcher informed respondents that the study was purely academic.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology and research design adopted by the study. It also highlighted the target population, sample size, sampling techniques, and the data collection procedures. The ethics that guided the study were also explored. The research adopted the exploratory case study approach and triangulation mixed research methodology as its design. Research instruments employed in the study included the open and close ended questionnaires, participatory observation and in depth semi structured interviews. Quota and purposive sampling were used to select respondents to the study.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The propulsive impetus or thrust of this chapter aims to give a detailed data analysis, comprehensive presentation of the research findings and interpretation of the study at hand. Photographs permeated the use of visual sociology to enable factual analysis of the collected information. Data presentation will be hinged immensely on the respective research objectives of the study.

4.1 Background to respondents

Student respondents (Full time and Visiting students) were drawn from the 5 faculties that were purposively selected by the researcher which included: the Arts, Commerce, Education, Social Sciences and Natural Resource Management and Agriculture Faculties. Demographically on the gender variable the majority of the participants sampled to inform questionnaires were females 30(55%) females and 25 (45%) males. Key informants who informed the in-depth semi structured interviews included faculty deans, chairpersons of the aforementioned faculties, heads/ directors of departments and certain key influential individuals from the university's top administration. All these gave their respective insight on the role of the institute in ensuring equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all

4.2 Response Rate Analysis

A combined sample size of 60 students comprising of 50 fulltime students and 10 visiting students were purposively selected to inform the questionnaires. All the faculties had a 100%

response rate except for the Commerce and Natural Resource Management and Agriculture faculties which had 9 out of 10 (90%) and 8 out of 10 (80%) respectively. Significantly the general all-inclusive response rate was 91.6% across all faculties of respondents, to which the questionnaires were administered to.

Table4. 1: Respondents by Faculties

Faculty		Number of questionnaires	Number of questionnaires completed	Number of questionnaires not completed	Response rate
Arts	Fulltime Students	10	10	0	100%
Commerce		10	9	1	90%
Education		10	10	0	100%
Natural Resources Management and Agriculture		10	8	2	80%
Social sciences		10	10	0	100%
	Visiting students from the above faculties	10	8	2	80%
Total response rate					91.6%

Source: Research Findings 2018

Table 1 encapsulates that 55 out of the expected 60 questionnaires that were self-administered to students (fulltime and visiting) were completed and returned. A total of 14 out of 15 (93.3%) in depth semi structured interviews were conducted with key informants to richly inform the study. Saunders et al (2009) opines that a response rate of 75% for interviews, 65% for self-completion

questionnaires is generally considered feasible, satisfactory and representative of the population under study. Inclusively the response rate was 92% which the researcher considered to be stupendous and informative.

The self-administered questionnaires embodied 21 questions(See Appendix A) which incorporated 13 closed ended questions and 6 open ended questions conformed with the aim of probing students perceptions, experiences , opinions on the precepts of SDG4 which enabled collection of data that was in euphony with the objectives of the study. This encompassed measuring the responsiveness, accessibility, legibility, availability, knowledge of students with regards to inclusive, equitable quality education. The questionnaire also consisted questions that probed student perceptions on the culmination, effects of the Multi Campus system to the provision of equitable quality education and student sentiments on the major indicators of quality education at the institute.

With the students purposively selected to inform the questionnaires being drawn from different faculties and campus settings (MSU Zvishavane satellite campus and Gweru main campus) research findings established that student perspectives differed on whether the institution gives all students equal opportunities to be heard and on the aspect of the multi campus system with regards to the provision of inclusive, equitable quality education. The majority of the respondents however commended the multi campus system as effective through decongesting a crowded environment, student access to: resources ratio is now palatable, incorporating new progressive, pragmatic programs and making tertiary education accessible in various provinces thereby tackling the cumbersome issue of the distance traveled to access higher education which is critical gendered aspect of equitable and inclusive quality education. Their opinions shall be enlightened and identified further on in the thesis. The interview guide consisted 17 questions

(See Appendix B) which were structured to solicit the institution's policy, strategy, plans to scale up education for sustainable development and andragogy for developing sustainability competencies which is critical   towards SDGs and the subsequent SDG4 which is the focus of the study.

4.3 Analysis and Presentation of Data

4.3.1   The contribution of MSU in upgrading education facilities to promote inclusive quality education

This key unit of analysis was enshrined, grounded in critically examining the existence of facilities, equipment's, buildings (tangibles) at the institution that depict the inclusion of students living with disabilities and the constantly changing student body. Inclusive quality education holds cognizance in that it denotes the linkage between availability, accessibility of resources and the rights of the students. In concordance with this objective the university in pursuing SDG 4 is expected to contribute towards the realization of the 2030 agenda by refurbishing and introducing robust resilient infrastructure to create a conducive, inclusive learning environment which is also in sync with the SDGs general principle "Leave no one behind principle" which addresses how inclusive quality education is an indispensable building block in fueling social cohesion through the participation of everyone. Section B and C on the questionnaires contained both close ended and open ended questions which were designed to impetrate the views of students on how the institute has adjusted its facilities to be inclusive through measuring responsiveness and accessibility.

4.3.2 Disability Facilities

Described as the incorporation of the previously stigmatized people into the mainstream societal sphere so that inequality is not perpetuated. An analysis of research findings indicates that the institute has strived to provide proper user friendly facilities, services and equipment's for students living with disabilities. For instance with education access being a key element of inclusive quality education, the university has been on the upward trajectory through refurbishing facilities like the library, clinics, lecture rooms with wheel chair ramps and flexible pavements to ease access in all its satellite campuses. The integration of students with disabilities through the provision of high quality services in the form of facilities that augments their learning shows how disability equity is an important component in the university's diversity agenda. This is why the university has a department on Quality Assurance Teaching, Learning and Performance Contracting concerned with upholding quality service provision and delivery.

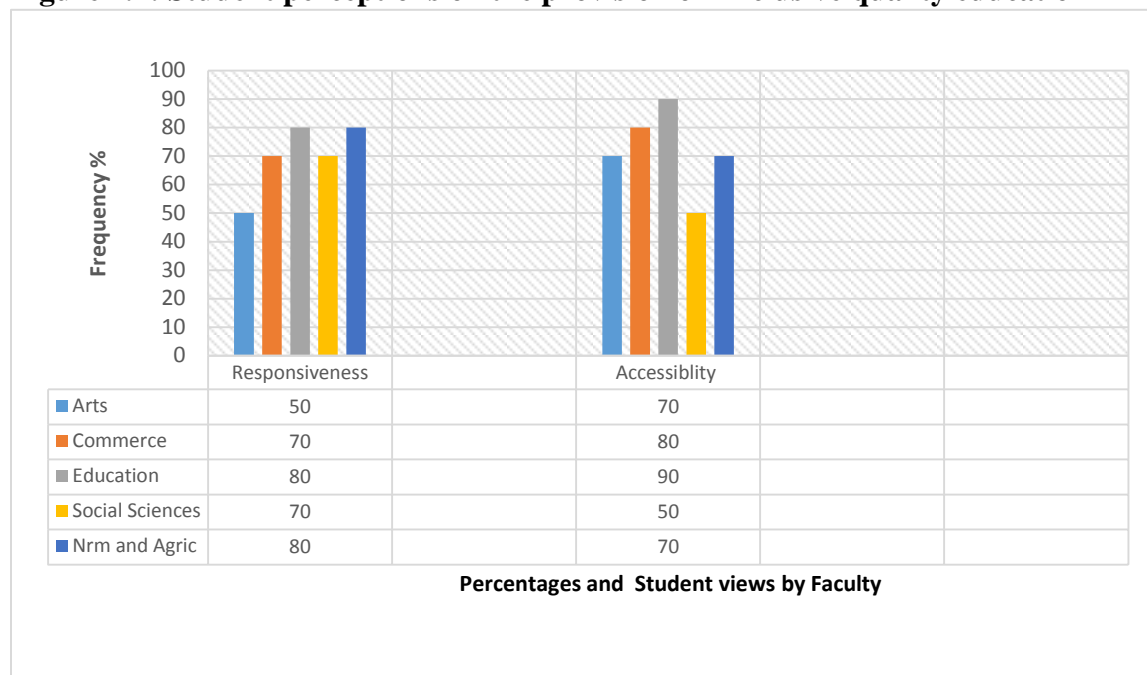**Figure 4.1 shows newly constructed ramp at Zvishavane campus**

4.3.3 Disability Mainstreaming

To show its commitment and efforts towards inclusive quality education the university in all its campuses has an entire department on Disability solely waiting to serve Students Living with Disabilities. An in depth interview with one of the Disability Coordinators at the institute

unraveled that this designated department at the institution is determined to provide access to university classes, programs and activities for the disabled students. This department has thrived to ensure coordination with lectures for the transcription of in class tests, assignments, transcription of end of year semester examinations so that lecturers have access to students' work and examinations in time. Study findings also revealed that the disability resource centers have facilities and equipment's like the Eye Pal SOLO, Prodigi Connect and the Braille Embosser which actuate the learning of students with disabilities. Since internet has become another resemblance of infrastructure aiding infinite opportunities and self-sufficiency. Midlands State University has ensured scalable connectivity in all spaces and provision of E learning facilities for all which have ensured equal access at the institution. The quiddity and peculiarity of some of these facilities shows how the university is trying to buttress these students to reach their full learning potential to ensure inclusive quality education. Inversely disability mainstreaming at the institute should engulf and highlight the consultation and involvement of the affected students or students living with disabilities in the designing of infrastructure which is a dynamic mechanism, strategy in upholding the "Anything without us is not for us" concept which form the understructure of SDG 4.

Figure 4.2: Student perceptions on the provision of Inclusive quality education

	Responsiveness	Accessiblity
■ Arts	50	70
■ Commerce	70	80
■ Education	80	90
■ Social Sciences	70	50
■ Nrm and Agric	80	70

Percentages and Student views by Faculty

Source: Research Findings 2018

In clarifying how the university has upgraded and built facilities to ensure inclusive quality education, students' perceptions, and experiences in different campus settings (Gweru main campus and Zvishavane campus) were sought so as to get a clear insight. The chart above shows that the majority of students in all faculties had high appraisal of campus facilities in terms of disability mainstreaming measured through accessibility and responsiveness (ability to adjust/ alter quickly). On the extent to which the facilities have been accessible for all, 33 (65%) of the students cited the current installation of ramps for wheel chairs to ease access in campus buildings like the ICT spaces , health facilities , lecture rooms and the library as positive outlooks of inclusive quality education. As reflected in **figure 4.1** 35 students (63%) saw the institute as responsiveness to inclusive quality education. Other students however cited that the

university needs to do more for students with multiple disabilities and their perspectives corroborated with the majority of the key informants who revealed that though in some high rise buildings Lifts have been installed which to a marginal extent has ensured access, these lifts have not been installed in all high rise buildings at the institute including student hostels which denotes an element of inconsistency which sets a conundrum of how committed the institution is in ensuring equal opportunities . Citing the above reasons one respondent noted that the university is not highly compliant and is still lagging behind in terms of inclusive quality education. With the SDG phenomenon ongoing current exercises at the university will go a long way in ameliorating inclusive quality education and inclusive values into societies, as inclusive universities beget inclusive societies. The findings were in line with the Transformative theoretical frame work that guided the study.

4.3.3 Legibility

This element entails the noticeability, designing, integrated signage, way finding elements of campus facilities that raise awareness, a sense of belongingness to the student body, employers, and the general public which is a crucial artefact that enacts inclusive quality education. Major findings on legibility from respondents indicated that the library facilities , lecture rooms, the administration block, car parks , the clinics have pathways and signs which are way finding and clear movement elements that facilitate diversity in learning. One respondent noted that in terms of signage the university is highly legible which supports diversity in learning as facility functions and entrances are easily identifiable. The graph below measured student's opinions on the extent to which the campus facilities are legible and the majority of fulltime students 44 (80%) highly appraised campus legibility though their views varied from visiting students especially from the Gweru main campus who cited the lack of direction boards , campus maps at

the entrance gate as detrimental to legibility. Low frequency from the Arts and Social Sciences faculties can be explained by the fact that these two faculties are in the recently opened Zvishavane campus which is not yet well developed to be considered highly legible. This problem therefore hinders the aspect of inclusive quality education for this set of students and the general public.

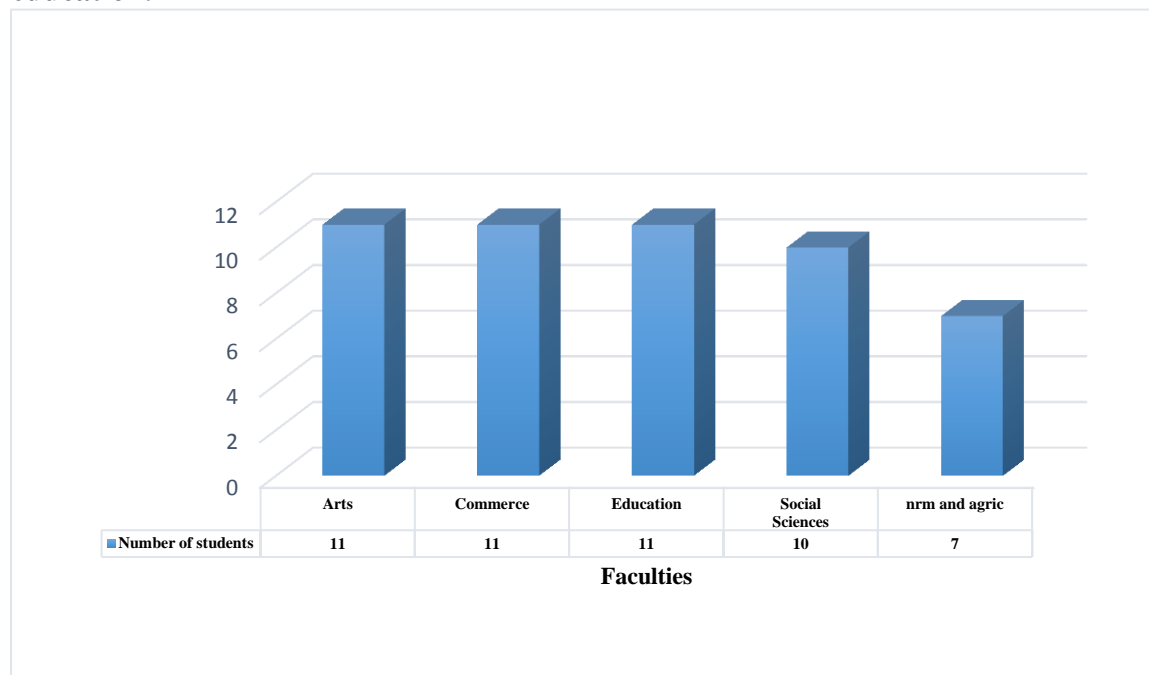**Figure 4.3 Student opinions on Campus Legibility**
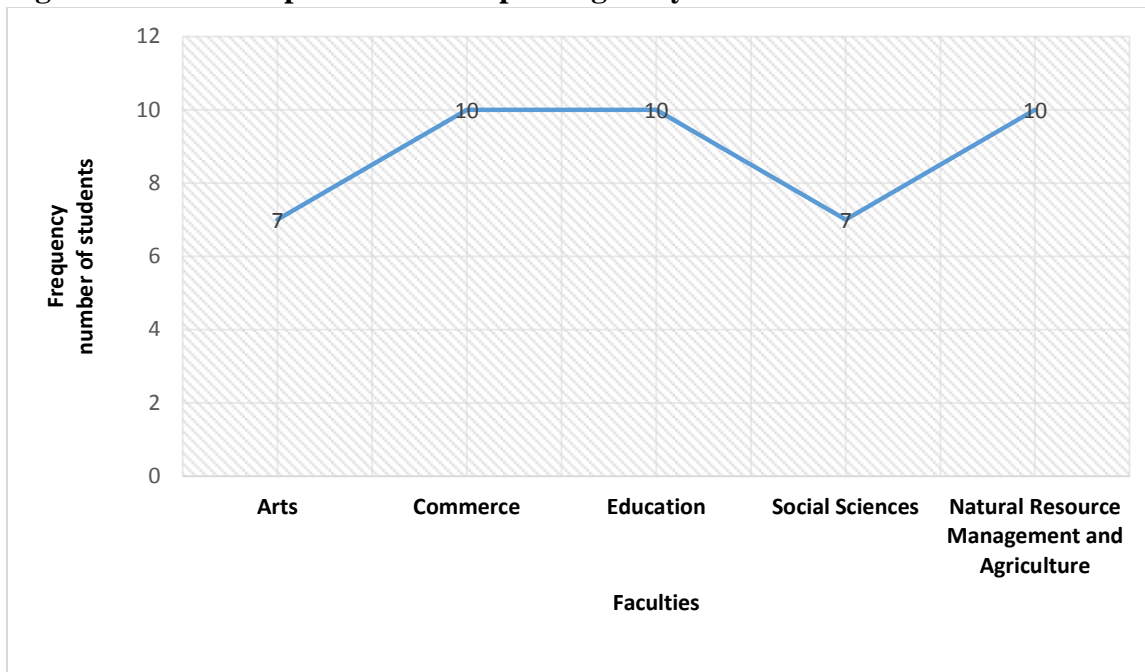
Source: Research Findings 2018

This being a participatory research, observations noted that in terms of quality air ventilation and natural lighting campus facilities are engaging and contextually legible which has overwhelming impact on the student's attentiveness and attendance.

4.4 Ways in which the university is eliminating disparities in education to promote equitable quality education.

This rationale was mainly concerned with interrogating closely the policies, strategies and initiatives put in place by the university to prevent polarity between students. Aside from inclusivity, equitability in access to and provision of quality services is an insurmountable determinant of quality education. Equitable quality education as a key strategic identification area in pursuing the 2030 agenda, evokes enormous evaluation perspectives from students, staff members and accreditation councils as it is a critical aspect affecting many universities. With the institute expanding quantitatively issues of equality can easily be noticeable at a big institution therefore it is a prerogative and a prerequisite that the university trades carefully on issues of equitability to ensure quality assurance mechanism are always existent.

Figure 4.4: Does the learner understand, know inequitable access to and attainment of education.

	Arts	Commerce	Education	Social Sciences	nrm and agric
Number of students	11	11	11	10	7

Faculties

Source: Research Findings 2018

50

Students who informed the questionnaires were asked on their knowledge regarding equitable quality education as a fundamental human right and intrinsic determinant of quality education. As depicted in **figure 4.3** above the majority of students 50 (90%) had knowledge on the aspects that illuminate equitable quality education which shows the degree of awareness of the students toward issues involving gender equity and equality, whereas 5(9%) students 5 indicated lack of insight towards the equitability in access to quality education which prompts aspects of ignorance and lack of awareness.

4.4.1 Gender Disparities

The first part of the interview guide for key informants was designed to solicit and probe policies, strategies adopted by MSU to eliminate disparities to ensure equitable quality education. Sentiments from one key informant brought to light and revealed that the university has an Affirmative Action policy which is gender biased in relation to admission in all programs in order to permeate female students to enter into male dominated programs with low cut off points as compared to their male counterparts. The policy has been part of the university's enrolment strategy for several years which is a crucial approach towards the attainment of equitable quality education. The end goal of this policy by the institute has been to ensure that a diversity of the society is reflected on campus. In addition, the university has also groomed gender sensitive, knowledgeable students by deeply engaging students in gender studies as a university wide module which has proved to be a monumental initiative in teetering towards equitable quality education and pursuing SDG4 realization.

Table 4. 2. Gender gap analysis in the Mining and Minerals Processing Faculty Departments

	2017 Intake	Female	Male		2018 Intake	Female	Male
Mining , Engineering (HMINE)	88	10	78		93	11	82
Mining and Metallurgical Engineering (HMETE)	27	5	22		32	9	23
TOTALS	115				125		

Source: Mining Department

The ratification of the 2030 agenda coincided with the introduction of the faculty of Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering at MSU in 2015. Theoretically and culturally in Zimbabwe the hegemonic and masculinity aspects ascribed to mining have been inclined towards men. The table above reflects the gender gap analysis of enrolment rates in the faculty from the 2017 and 2018 intakes. Clearly the enrolment ratio shows a glaring lack of gender diversity spanning from entry levels. Research findings however revealed that the university has made substantial perpetual strides in its enrolment through outreach programs to discuss gender diversity matters in communities to tackle barriers of ill informed choices that consistently prevent movement towards parity indices in mining and this has been validated by somehow a constant female enrolment ratio as arrayed in the above table. Since enrolment is not only about finding women with relatable skills gender diversity has continued to exist because of peer influence, unabated gender diversity is science subjects and the culturally propagated norm of attributing the mining trade to the male sex. Research observations opined that despite this MSU has gradually progressed in eliminating myriad norms and barriers to enrolment in mining programs as the faculty is gravitating positively towards equitable quality education and the 2030 agenda. The current crop of female students will save as role models, visible recognition and act as

foundational tools in providing impetus that will ultimately alter the complexion of perceptions of this sector for future growth which is fundamental in pursuing the 2030 agenda.

4.4.2 Entry Systems

Findings from research interviews indicated that the introduction of various flexible threshold systems by the university has ensured equitable quality education through cutting across generational barriers. In a way the various modes of entry systems: the parallel, block, conventional, weekend classes and visiting student classes has ensured the complementarity between economic endeavors and pursuing education goals by not withholding people from work. This system   has fostered equal access at the institution which is an indispensable determinant of equitable quality education in pursuing the 2030 agenda. In addition, the institution has the mature entry system that allows admission of persons with O' level passes who are 23 years of age for females and 25 years for males that would have demonstrated the potential suitability for university studies by virtue of their attainments or relevant work experience Midlands State University Year Book (2015-2019). The exercises show how university are a key stakeholder in SDGs implementation and realization.

4.4.3 Environment free from abuse and harassment

Described as any behavior that include unwelcome sexual advances, request, comments, acts and gestures. To safeguard an environment free from abuse and harassment which is a critical determinant of equitable quality education study findings revealed that the university harbors closely monitored policies to counter such disparities within its regulatory framework: "The rules of student Conduct and discipline Ordinance 2000, a gender policy and a policy on sexual harassment. By enacting these policies that govern issues of harassment and misconduct the

institution has permeated an environment which interposes the rights of students and employees to pursue education and professional goals.

4.4.5 Multi Campus System

An analysis of research findings from interviews indicate that the multi campus system is a pivotal distinguishable strategy in providing equitable quality education by the institution. Sachs (2015) opines that resources influence equitable quality education. By and large the multi campus approach by Midlands State University has offered the incorporation of new programs, diversification in learning through a paradigm shift from confining all faculties at one principal intermediate campus to protracting into different campus settings which offer distinct specialized programs .Remarkably the Zvishavane campus has promulgated new avenues for the Mining programs to benefit immensely from being in the contagious zone of a mining town and vicinity of big mining companies like Mimosa. Another strength which this approach has been highly commendable for, is that it has harnessed and increased access to education by unfolding a critical solution in tackling the challenge surrounding the distance travelled to access higher education which has been a critical gendered aspect afflicting equitable access to tertiary education in Zimbabwe especially for female students.

Figure 4.5: Multi Campus system in relation to the provision of equitable quality education?
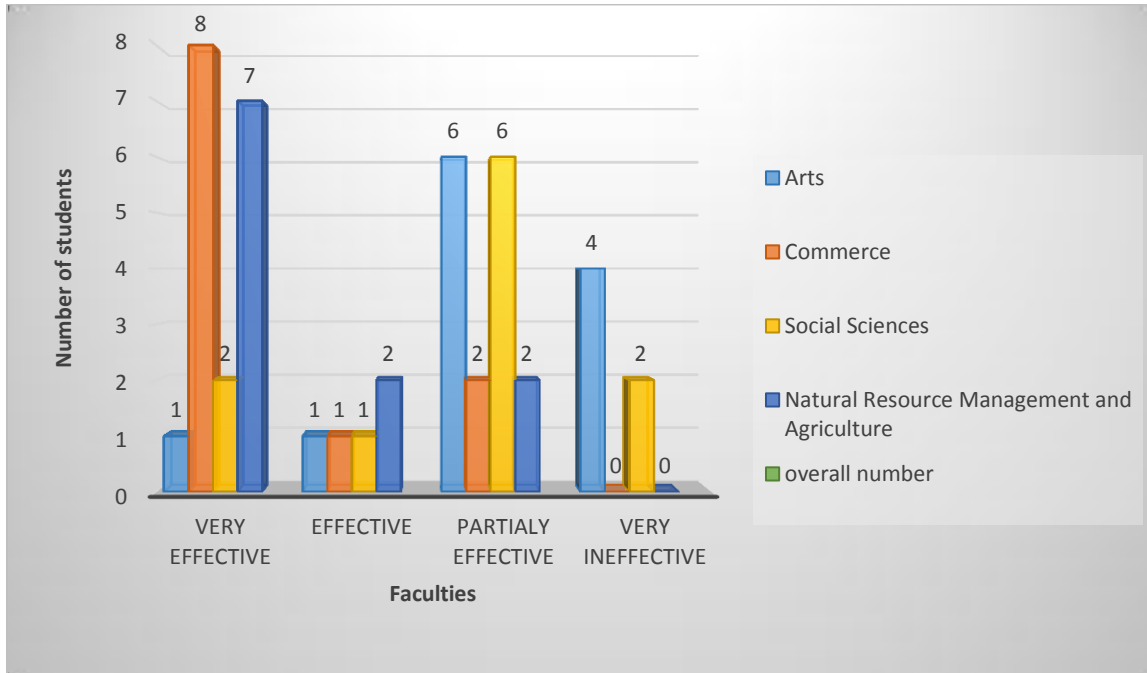
Source: Research Findings 2018

On the degree to which respondents felt the inception of the multi campus approach by the university as being effective in proffering equitable quality education, an interesting enigma emerged from responses as illustrated in **figure 4.3,** as students varied and lacked unanimity in their perspectives. Information obtained from the follow up questionnaires indicated that the 50 (90%) students who appraised the decentralization policy as effective alluded to the endowment , ease of access to expandable, conducive, flexible infrastructure such as library facilities with strong unlimited techno complex Wi-Fi services as preeminent elements of equitable quality education that have emanated from this approach by the institute. The convenience to legible lecture rooms for all departments, approachable lecturer's offices and adequate equipment's like chairs, desks and a beneficial dependable transportation system by means of buses are other vital facets to equitable quality education which have also aroused as trickled dynamic amenities from the decentralization policy. These services are vital in suiting

student satisfaction who had experienced a preceding system were access to some of these resources were limited or nonexistent.

Closer examination of the graph above indicates that the decentralization policy has also aided the main campus in Gweru, as noted by responses from students in the Education, Commerce, Natural Resource Management and Agriculture faculties who saw the system as effective through enabling a more expansive learning environment and creating room for further development. However, the other 10% (6) students who regarded the system as ineffective cited the multi campus system as a misapplication of resources which would have been channeled in fully evolving the main campus with structures like the general staff library, lecture theaters, senior common rooms for debates and state of the art buildings. In addition, respondents felt the concept only prioritizes the main campus especially in terms of sports and that disabled students outside Gweru are not in receipt of much level of capacitation particularly in terms of equipment's in the Disability Resource center which structurally are small in size and less equipped reflecting how the university has not been able to trickle down resources at the main campus to others decentralized centers. Their opinions were in tandem with responses obtained from interviews with certain key informants who beheld the multi campus idea as competent nonetheless they noted that it was wrongfully implemented as it disperses sparse resources which is detrimental to quality education and proper development. This is something that may entail special attention from the university to ensure equal and quality capacitation of all students.

4.5 The ways in which MSU standards and curricula reflect quality education

The principal area of focus on this thrust is predominantly conformed in assessing the institution's approach to scale up education for sustainable development and andragogy (adult/

method, philosophy of learning) for developing sustainability competencies in students. This feature also included components of the Transformative Learning theoretical framework which guided this study and vital determinants of quality education being offered by the institution which are crucial to student's satisfaction. Sustainability under this study is simply learning from the past, thinking about the present and planning about the future.

4.5.1 Curricula

This is largely concerned with how the university has increased demand for SDG related education. By and large the university supports development imperatives at national, regional and international level. This has also included ascribing to economic, social, political, environmental and technological aspirations. The university 's result based management programs and strategic plans have also been informed and compliant to the Zim Asset blueprint which has implied in that by addressing these national policies and priorities MSU is indirectly responding to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The university has progressively responded to the demand for SDG related education, Goal 4 in particular through rebranding development programs to address goal demands. Environment related education programs have also been offered at the institute and in different faculties' indigenous knowledge systems modules, environment management modules, sustainable development modules like peace and security which address issues of the importance of peaceful coexistence with the environment.

In the past decades people assumed development to be synonymous with male students only, but with issues of gender equality being pivotal to sustainable development the university has in calculated that phenomenon within its curricula and activities so that every person is involved in sustainable development. Primarily the philosophy of education and forms of tutelages that

promote sustainability competencies in students are key in pursuing the 2030 agenda (SDG realization). The university's curriculum has also been fairly good in training future sustainable development leaders through in class test training, the Turnitin system that upholds critical thinking and prevents plagiarism. Research findings revealed that in recent times the university has made efforts to blend ICT, and online education with face to face instruction lectures as key methods of the university's andragogy (form of teaching) through its ELearning platform. This however has been rarely done as there is little knowledge and usage of the method by students and lecturers. Another key aspect within the university 's curricula has been closing the digital gender gap through provision of spacious ICT spaces, equating Internet access, digital technology skills, connectivity, provision of digital literacy and services which have the potential to be game changers to gender equality and achieving SDG 4, the university has also in a way positioned a strong foundation key in achieving sustainable development. The European Commission (2018) Report on Education purports by 2025 over 200 million jobs will require digital technical skills. In a way such exercise at the university are pivotal in pursuing SDG 4 as the future of work settings are gloomy to those without digital skills**.**

4.5.2 Extra Curriculum Activities

Described as non-academic activities that fall outside of the realm of the core curriculum of university education. This is another determinant of quality education and crucial aspect of inclusive, equitable quality education and developing sustainability competencies in students which the university has unwaveringly supported. However, the study also revealed that students in other campus settings   like the Zvishavane and Harare campuses have felt short changed by the lack of on campus sport facilities.

4.5.2.1 Student Clubs

Information obtained from interviews indicated that the university is a hub of vibrant student clubs which are imparting entrepreneurial skills, computer skills, cultural values and value addition skills in communities. The university has 60 Students Clubs / Associations which are inclusive and cut across all genders. Research finding indicated that these clubs have projects and programs that directly address Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, Enactus has projects that address SDG 3 on health, Goal 7 on energy, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 14 on life under water. The student club has implemented SDG 3 in its women's menstrual health and well-being nationwide project of distributing sanitary wear. Through promoting the use of alternative sources of energy to substitute fuel with low carbon emission alternatives and recycling of plastics into fuel projects in Gweru (Senga) the student club has promoted affordable reliable sustainable energy which is Goal 7 of the 2030 agenda which has shown engagement of university's structures in pursuing SDG realization. Rotaract student club has been assisting in community humanitarian action initiatives through paying the fees for less privileged children at Senga secondary school, donating exercise books, satchels and sanitary wear which impact quality education (SDG4). These exercises and activities will go a long way in grooming future sustainable development leaders, showing university impact in SDGs and SDG rapporteurs. Below is a table showing some student clubs and their related SDG which they are helping in communication and realization.

Table 4.3: Students Club and their related SDGs.

STUDENTS CLUBS / ASSOCIATION and Function in communities	Sustainable Development Goals being implemented
WEB FOR LIFE: teach sexual reproductive health in communities	Goal 3
PEER EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION: teach sexual health , sexual reproductive health, maternal health , family planning in Zvishavane	Goal 3
BECAUSE I CARE: poverty alleviation projects and community engagement.	Goal 1 and 2
HERITAGE AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION: teach the preservation and management of the environment and	Goal 13
LEADERSHIP EXPERINCES AND OPPORTUNITY: food security community humanitarian action, hampers to the needy in Gweru	Goal 2
TAKE UP AND INNOVATIVE MINDS AND TECHNOLOGY: computer skills , training high school students computer literacy	Goal 3
WATI WATI THEARTE CLUB : Edutainment , cultural values, teach drama, arts vital in that education is the reproductive organ of culture	Goal 4

4.5.2.2 Sports

This is another key component of quality education. Study findings from interviews indicated that the university's sports facilities are built-up for all students in all disciplines. The university provides equitable and inclusive access to sports facilities. Students living with disabilities have also been able to participate in Paralympics sporting activities like the goalball which is explicitly for students with visual impairments. MSU offers multifaceted equitable sporting activities for both sexes which include both male and females hand ball, soccer, chess, darts, basketball, martial arts and netball teams. Equipment for sporting activities have also been

rendered equitably. The university's sporting prowess has been shown by having the only university women soccer team in the national league, male soccer team in the division 2 soccer league, darts team for both men and women playing in their respective leagues. Research findings also revealed that motivational allowances, winning bonuses, and monthly allowances are being given to students excelling in sports tournaments and leagues which is vital facet to student participation and financial benefit. Since qualities in sporting engagements are transferable to other aspects of life, sporting activities have sustainably helped students and the university's reputation to some degree. In addition, sports permeate a breeding ground for sustainable leaders through captains, impart time budgeting skills, discipline, physical health and occupation thereby averting student involvement from retrogressive social activities like drug abuse. However, the university has not been able to provide sporting wheel chairs for student with disabilities which has limited their participation and consistent engagement in extracurricular activities. Even though the Zvishavane campus acquired the McAdams sports fields students feel the university has to do more to ensure on campus sport facilities.

4.5.3 Multi Stakeholder Engagements

The study revealed that in pursuing the 2030 agenda the university engages with multiple stakeholders through the triple P (Public, Private Partnerships) strategy which is a critical aspect of sustainable development and quality education. Projects by the institution that are in line with the Zim Asset economic blueprint show how the institute has made paces in operationalizing national priorities and international sustainability principles. This has been done through community engagements to empower communities with income generating projects, embodying strong community participation and utilizing locally available resources. Notably Midlands State University's guinea fowl project at the Gwomtutu Community Engagement Centre in

Mberengwa by the Department of Animal and Wildlife Sciences. These projects have aimed to capacitate and eradicate poverty which is line with the Zim Asset Food Security and Poverty Eradication cluster. The university's Tokwe Mukosi Multidisciplinary Research Institute which promotes shared understanding, water harvesting in the form of the dam is vital as a relief to poverty and underdevelopment. By inviting researchers to conduct baseline surveys in and around Tokwe Mukosi in indigenous knowledge systems, agricultural impacts to livelihoods, dam safety, sustainable water governance the university is contributing towards societal transformation which is key in pursuing the SDGs.

In addition, the university has levels of consultation in engaging stakeholders. The institute in designing the curriculum consults various stakeholders: the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education, ZIMCHE, companies (employers), parents and students. At Work Related Learning level the university engages with employers to obtain ideas of how relevant university modules are to development and the labor market. Students through their work related learning reports proffer feedback to the university from their employers on what transpired, their exposure and experiences during the period forming a cordial vicious cycle of stakeholder engagements. Since knowledge is dynamic, to avoid obsolete modules the university after 5 years reviews its curriculum and rebrands modules to suit the constantly varying labor market demands. The Mining faculty in Zvishavane has also engaged with local mining companies like Unki mine and Mimosa which is beneficial to students. These ongoing exercises go a long way in pursuing the 2030 agenda.

4.6 MSU's Lifelong learning Education Strategies

Lifelong literacy is a pre requisite component of quality education at Midlands State University. Lifelong learning at higher education presents the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of individuals from experiences encountered in the course of lifetime. In pursuing SDG 4, Digital transformation in this highly globalized world has made the prospect of employability inclined to those with technological literacy and the institute to counter this it has embedded and furthered Lifelong learning ideals of technological innovation skills through Information Technology and literacy skills compulsory modules within its curricula. By offering financial literacy trainings, entrepreneurship education, research skills and communication skills MSU is augmenting vital lifelong management skills in students. The university engages learners of all ages in acquiring, applying knowledge, skills by integrating working and learning people through different modes of entry in which visiting, block release students are lifelong learners. Study findings from interviews revealed that the urgency of the university in ushering lifelong university wide modules stems from various factors like demographic changes, increased computerization, rapid changes in technology, and current turbulences in the economic system which have increased the demand of learners to retool their capabilities. By and large the introduction of the Work related learning concept which bridges theory and practice has ensured that students are molded, grounded into a whole life learning scenario. The ongoing construction of Innovation Hubs which bridges knowledge and industry to help transform ideas into goods and services at the institute is vital in fostering entrepreneurship which is a key ideal component of lifelong learning.

Section C of the open ended questions on the questionnaire were meant to solicit student views on which modules at the institution have sharpened interpersonal skills and heighten their carrier

opportunities in a lifelong perspective and the majority of respondents cited entrepreneurship education as chiefly impactful through knowledge on business skills, business plans as it presents every student with a chance to upgrade themselves beyond the university either as consultant or entrepreneur given the current economic problems inflicting the formal employment sector and economy in Zimbabwe. However with Midlands State University having a large array of lifelong learners the university needs to measure the quantitative impact of these learners to the economy.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a thorough discussion of the research findings using information obtained from the semi structured interviews, questionnaires and observations. The chapter chiefly dwelt on an insightful assessment of the role of the university in pursing SDG4 by shedding effulgent light on how the institution is ensuring equitable, quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all. The discussion pointed out that in terms of inclusive quality education the university is still lagging behind but current exercise within the university settings depict remarkable strides towards inclusive quality education. The background of respondents was presented, response rates were analyzed. Data analysis was done thematically under the auspices of the 4 objectives which informed the study at hand. Quantitative data was analyzed by Excel and presented through the usage of pictures, descriptive form through tables, charts, diagrams and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed and presented through narrations. The next chapter will focus on the study recommendations and conclusion based on the research questions.

CHAPTER 5:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the detailed conclusions of this study. With the SDGs phenomenon ongoing until 2030 the study will give recommendations that have been articulated based upon the research findings. The recommendations will go a long way in acting as a toolkit guiding the university in pursuing and aligning SDG4 within its strategy, policy, curricula and subsequently show how education runs the ideal thread towards the realization of all Sustainable Development Goals. The subsequent research questions and SDG 4 variables guided the study.

5.1 Conclusion

 The conclusions of the study are best grasped when presented in direct correspondence with the questions that informed the study, firstly by looking at the key determinants of equitable, inclusive quality education at the education. Study findings presented the compound, interrelated variables of SDG4 broadly falling into 3 categories equitable quality education, inclusive quality education and lifelong learning which are key tenets in pursuing SDG4 realization. The above variables show how universities are a central in determining whether a person is excluded or included in development as they can potentially infringe upon the rights and entitlements thereby undermining ingress to resources as alluded to earlier by the Cognitive Democratic theory which guided the study. The university has made substantial steps in providing equitable, inclusive quality education and grooming all rounded students with technological literate skills, entrepreneur skills who are also deeply vexed with gender studies.

The provision of equitable, quality education is hinged primarily on polices and quality service delivery. As far as quality assurance and service delivery is concerned the university has a department on Quality Assurance Teaching, Learning and Performance Contracting which was chiefly designed to ensure quality service delivery and products at the university. The Multi campus decentralization policy by the university has proven to be a key reproduction system to key determinants of equitable, inclusive quality education. Though it was met with skepticism the system has enabled distanced learning, new entry systems like the Harare weekend classes, and block release students, ensured the construction of new expansive accessible facilities like libraries at the Zvishavane campus, ensured diversification, incorporation of new pragmatic, progressive modules , ensured specialization like the Mining faculty which in the contagious zone of mining companies in Zvishavane availability of sports and extracurricular though to a limited extent to students living with disabilities activities which is a critical aspect that needs to be addressed. The university needs to ensure that all facilities at the Gweru main campus are emulated in all its other satellite centers through the trickledown effect to avoid other student from feeling short changed. Campus legibility is still a factor that put the university standards at a disadvantaged and this needs to be addressed, despite improvements in signage the university should have a campus direction map to ensure inclusive quality education. Limited knowledge dissemination and policy formulation on SDGs acts as an obstacle to the realization and communication of the agenda which the university needs to address. Student clubs have at the institution have been instrumental in pursuing SDGs through supporting issues of menstrual and sexual health in communities , issues of food security and environment management which typify huge avenues in communication and realization of the agenda. Community humanitarian

actions, paying of school fess, distribution of exercise books by student clubs also go a long way in aiding SDG4.

The institution has ensured learning that is authentic, applicable and relevant to the contemporary globalized world and in particular to SDG4. The work related learning concept has enabled student who be wholly engaged in a whole life learning environment instead of being confined to tradition modules. The curricula has encompassed universal content areas through, gender studies, ICT education, innovation hubs, financial management literacy skills and entrepreneurship education to mold student capabilities. Lecturer sabbaticals and exchange programs have also been key in proffering new ideals that are compliant to national development imperatives and international aspirations. There is need however to substantiate the lifelong learning concept at the university with short courses and professional specialization.

Disability and gender main streaming has been upheld at the university though to a lesser extent on the latter. Firstly, the university has a Disability Resource Centre in all its campus to actuate the learning of student living with disabilities. Campus facilities have been refurbished with wheel chair ramps to ensure mobility and tackle dependence of these students, however the university needs to address this aspect as it is not highly compliant and still lagging behind. Sports facilities and activities like goalball have also been made accessible to these students but to a limited extent as there are no sport wheel chairs and this has affected the inclusivity aspect. Student responses recorded showed immense understanding and ability to depict the existence of inequalities in equitable and inclusive access to resources. Gender mainstreaming has been successful and visible in affirmative action policies in terms of enrolment. The university has also enacted policies like the gender policy and policy on sexual harassment to ensure an

environment free for abuse and harassment. Payment plans have ensured economic inclusion and in some instance students have been able to write exams without payment of full fees which is crucially towards the realization of SDG4.

5.2 Recommendations

Midlands State University needs to firstly enact a policy on disability to surmount attitudinal, institutional barriers to inclusivity and ensure inclusive quality education. This move is critical in pursuing SDG4 as one of the main principles of the 2030 agenda includes leaving no one behind. The most alarming areas that need prompt attention in terms of inclusive quality education include improving accessibility to all buildings for students living with disabilities through user friendly pavements and wheel chair ramps. Infrastructure like ablutions and universal accessible toilets should also be availed at the institution. Learning equipment's and reading gadgets like the Eye-Pal SOLO, Prodigi Connect and Embosser to convert print to braille which are few at the university need to be addressed. The university's health department also needs to address the gap of the lack of sexual and reproductive health education to students living with disability through peer education and pamphlets in accessible formats. Since terminology is key in pursuing the 2030 development architecture the university should be an agent, key proponent of transformation to correct the discourse around disability language on respect to these students. The university should make it obligatory for all departments to do outreach programs to Disability Centers like Danhiko and Jairo's Jiri to encourage these people to pursue higher education which is key step towards the implementation of the SDG4. On campus legibility is a critical aspect of inclusive quality education which impacts the overall diversity of learning

spaces, the institute should have a campus map with   directions and the structure of the whole campus at the gate in all its centers to pacify accessibility and clear movement.

- The university should aid the communication of SDGs through translating the Goals and their targets in into various languages like Kalanga, Tonga, Ndau and Ndebele languages which will be easily understandable by everyone. These action will go a long way in properly decoding sustainable development into communities and show university impact to sustainable development.

- The majority of masters programs PhDs and undergraduate degrees at the university are time framed, to fully embed the Lifelong learning concept the university should introduce shorts and specialized courses.

- Midlands State University should scale up education for sustainable development through firstly a policy framework on ICT, as a starting point for everything. To fully engage student the institution should fortify its curricula with ICT based andragogy (form of teaching or pedagogy) therefore forming blended learning to encourage face to face interaction and online education which is critical in pursuing the 2030 agenda. In addition, the university should enact a platform in which students on attachment or students on Work related learning students use the ELearning platform to interact with lecturers regularly, share their experiences, challenges and upload their weekly reports on the platform.

- To create sustainable hubs of learning and breeding grounds for sustainable development leaders the university should think globally and act locally by having Demonstration labs centers, Common room facilities for debates, State of the Art theaters and lecture theaters in all its campuses.

- On the issue of safeguarding an environment free from abuse and sexual harassment as alluded to earlier on the university should assist departments like Film and Arts Theater with adequate resources for short films and Skits on the effects of abuse and sexual harassment which will capacitate and raise awareness to the whole student body on matters of abuse. This is a more direct, effective, understandable means of communication rather than the policy being stationed on the website which students rarely check and have knowledge of realistically.

- Finally, on the issue of student involvement on governance issues. It was noted during the progression of the research study that the majority of students felt left out on certain governance issues concerning them. The university should ensure strong internal stakeholder involvement especially at departmental level.

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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

This is a data collection tool for Armstrong Mudzengerere, Registration number (R145104Y) studying Honors Degree in Development Studies with Midlands State University. The research topic guiding this data collection tool is on "***Assessing the role of Universities in pursuing the United Nation's SDG 4- Goal". Case of Midlands State University.*** The researcher seeks to bring to the fore the substratum role of universities in SDG realization and to unravel the practicality of SDGs implementation. In this regard, the researcher therefore kindly seeks your profound assistance by answering the questions below. Your participation is entirely voluntary and I can assure you that this information will be strictly confidential and all information given to me will be used on research purpose only.

N.B: *All information that you will provide for this study will remain confidential and your names will not be disclosed. If you are not clear with any of the questions, I am willing to assist.*

SECTION A
- This section focuses on the demographic information.
1. Age   20 – 30   ☐

                                 31 – 40   ☐

                                 41 – 50   ☐

2. Gender   Male   ☐
                              Female   ☐

3. Academic Qualification
                              Diploma   ☐

                              Degree   ☐

                              Advanced Degree   ☐

4. Marital Status   Married   ☐
                              Not Married   ☐

5. Employment status   Employed   ☐

76

Unemployed ☐

Others (please specify) ……………..

6.   Faculties

   Arts ☐

   Commerce ☐

   Social Sciences ☐

   Education ☐

   Natural Resources and Agriculture Management ☐

SECTION B -CLOSED ENDED / LINKERT QUESTIONS
   ✦ *This part seeks to establish, investigate and clarify how the university has upgraded education facilities to be gender/ disability sensitive / responsive*

1. There is provision of a gender sensitive learning environment in the form of infrastructure and instructional material?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

2. The facilities at the Centre are inclusive/ gender responsive and accessible to all.

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

3 General services like health services, library services, academic equipment's are inclusive and equitable

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

   Not Sure……

4 There is gender and disability mainstreaming at the university?

   YES ☐

7 ☐

No

5 Does the Learner understand inclusive, equitable quality education as a fundamental human right?

          YES

          NO

6 Does the learner understand and know inequality in access to and attainment of education, particularly between boys and girls?

          YES

          NO

This part seeks to collect data on whether current standards and curricula reflect the need to promote EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION.

1.   Has the University ensured a schooling environment free from abuse and harassment?

          Yes

          No

          Do not know……………

2. Has MSU instilled a culture of peace, non-violent, fair, inclusive and equitable treatment of all students

          Yes

          No

          Not Sure……………

3 Does the institution give students opportunities to be heard and Are all students involved in university governance and decisions?

          Yes

          No

4. How do you rate the multi campus system in relation to provision of inclusive and equitable access to resources for all students?

Very Effective ☐

Effective ☐

Partially Effective ☐

Ineffective ☐

5 Is the teaching material inclusive, equitable, sufficient and of good quality?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6. Is the learner able to recognize the intrinsic value of quality education?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. There are sports and extracurricular activities facilities at the institution?

Yes ☐

No ☐

✦ *This part seeks to solicit data, knowledge and to determine whether the university is ensuring lifelong learning.*

1. Are their ICT spaces at the institution?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. Is there learning of ICT skills in curricula and ingress to computers for pedagogical use at the university?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

3. Is there provision of entrepreneurship education and information literacy skills at the university?

☐

Yes

No ☐

SECTION C- OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What would you say are the **major indicators** of inclusive, equitable quality education at the institution?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Would you highlight what you think are the **major benefits** of the multi campus system to students in ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education for all.

    ....

3 How does the center at which you are studying show interest in your present and future progress?

....

4 from a lifelong learning perspective which modules at the university have sharpened your confidence, interpersonal skills and heightened your career opportunities?

....

5. Would you say the schooling environment facilities at the institution depicts gender and disability mainstreaming? What are the indicators?

....

6.   Would you share your opinion on how the university has promoted equality in education?

....

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY RESPONDENTS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is an interview schedule that will be applied to the 15 interviewees that are targeted in this study. The reasons for holding these interviews is to impetrate, solicit information on the thoughts and knowledge of the staff members on the role of Universities in pursuing the United Nations SDG 4. The case of MSU. Sustainable Development Goals were unanimously adopted as Resolution 70/1 Transforming our World: 2030 agenda for sustainable development with 17 goals which aim to mobilize global effort to end poverty, foster peace, safeguard the rights and dignity of all UN General Assembly (2015). The focus of the study is on Goal 4 which is on the need to ensure equitable, inclusive quality education that promotes lifelong learning for all and the aim of the study is to depict how universities are a key stakeholder in pursuing and communication of SDGs through their core function which is education.

BODY OF INTERVIEW

1. What is the institution's approach, strategy to scale up education for sustainable development and pedagogy for developing sustainability competencies?
2. What are the main determinants of equitable quality education at the university?
3. Has the university increased demand for SDG related education?
4. Does the university contain a SDG based policy and strategy?
5. To what extent has the university ensured social inclusion through education. Does the university contain inclusive values?
6. How is the university training future sustainable development leaders in learning and does the university foster multi stakeholder engagements if yes which ones?
7. Does the university have any responsive policy interventions to tackle barriers like stigma, discrimination?
8. Has the university furthered and embedded the lifelong concept within its curricula?
9. How has the university established transdisciplinary settings for lifelong learning?
10. Is there use of ICT as a pedagogy at the university?
11. What positive outlooks are there at the university that depict the importance of the learning of students living with disabilities and to actuate the learning of minority ethnic groups
12. Has the multi campus systems enhanced equitable, inclusive quality education?
13. How have the university facilities promoted and encourage inclusivity in learning?
14. What has the university done to address issues surrounding gender disparities in education to promote equitability and to ensure an environment free from abuse and harassment
15. What are the perceptions of the university regarding the sdg4 phenomenon?
16. Do the current education facilities and standards reflect disability and gender responsiveness?

17 .IN YOUR OWN VIEW HOW CAN THE UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION AND REALIZTION OF SDGS THROUGH ITS CORE FUNCTION?