

## **CHAPTER 2: Enrolment Expansion as a University Survival Strategy: A Theoretical Review**

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The chapter presents a review of the literature related to the objectives and research questions of the study. It seeks to locate gaps from that to launch the thesis argument and familiarise with the phenomenon under study. The fundamental component of the study is to establish the impact of enrolment expansion as a survival strategy used by state universities in Zimbabwe. The current operational set up in the Zimbabwean higher education sector is a dynamic one and highly competitive with the emergence of many state and private universities. To ensure that state universities remain competitive in the market, they need to adopt survival strategies to ensure that they outperform their competitors. The universities that use survival strategies realise a performance advantage over their competitors.

Today almost all state universities in Zimbabwe have embarked on the enrolment expansion strategy to ensure their survival and sustainability in the higher education industry. Moreover, to have a bigger market share in any industry, organisations should understand the forces that shape the sectors' competition as a basis for developing a survival strategy (Sifuna, 2014). To provide adequately on survival strategies, the study looks into the Porter's five forces model of industry analysis and Porter's generic strategies and understand how it helps the study using information from the literature.

A strategy is a firm's game plan that enables the firm to create a competitive advantage (Mhizha, 2016). Strategy is the perspective, position, plan, and pattern used by organisations as a bridge between policy or high-order goals (Nickols, 2016). Strategy and tactics organized connect the gap amid ends and means. The firm needs to analyse itself bearing in mind what the competitors are doing (Nyamwanza, 2014). Strategy can also be defined as a set of decision-making rules for guidance

of organizational behaviour (Kasimoglu, 2009). A strategy is thus used as a yard stick to measure a firm's performance and define its relationship with the external environment (Nickols, 2016).

Organisations operate in environments that are very turbulent and the changes that take place in an environment greatly influence the business activities hence the need for survival strategies. A survival strategy is a sound and coherent pattern that is fixed and implemented to constantly overcome life's encounters to gain sustainability in a chosen environment and in turn gain financial peace (Acho, 2013). Similarly, Wyman (2014) reiterated that the survival strategy helps the firms to relate to their environment and serves as a guide to the organization on what it tries to do and achieve. When survival strategies are used, the business will be able to manage the expectations of its stakeholders.

Survival strategies helps the organisation to understand what is taking place within the external environment and helps strategists to prepare a strategy that ensures long-term profit and growth and this links with Michael Porter's model of competitiveness. The model suggests that to develop effective organisational strategies, managers must understand and react to those forces within an industry that determine an organisation's level of competitiveness within that industry (Omsa *et al.*, 2017). Competitive advantage is a benefit over competitors grown by offering customers greater value also by means of lower prices or by providing benefits and services that justify higher prices (Schuttinga, 2011).

Nganga (2016) defines enrolment as the act of enrolling at an institution or on a course. Rye (2009) views enrolment expansion as the greatest growth in number during the enrolment process. Similarly, Huang (2012) reiterated that enrolment expansion in higher education institutions refers solely to the gross proportion of new entrant students in the university. It means that the student enrolment growth appears to be speeding up (Nganga, 2016). Enrolment expansion in universities can be called the 'massification of higher education' (Bishau & Samkange, 2015). This means that enrolment expansion is a term that is used frequently in higher

education to describe a well-planned strategy and tactic to shape the enrolment of an institution and meet established goals (Rye, 2009).

Most state higher education organisations in Africa, in reaction to historical circumstances, have enrolled learners more than their capability, causing massification (Mohamedbhai, 2014). Enrolment expansion is a strategy used by many universities to enrol several students to be competitive in the higher education sector. It often comprises marketing, admission policies, retention curricula, and financial aid awarding to plan successful results. Competitive efforts to recruit students is a common emphasis of enrolment managers (Nganga, 2016).

Bishau & Samkange (2015) posit that Zimbabwe became part of an ongoing global process of massification of higher education, this came as developing countries were undergoing transition after the colonial elitist academic organisations that encouraged bottle-neck education systems. In higher education, the bottle neck system that used to limit the number of students who were expected to enrol at university was abolished and universities could enrol as many students as they can accommodate (*Ibid.*).

Enrolment expansion is a survival strategy used world-wide by universities and this is supported by Edwards & Radloff (2013) who observes that undergraduate enrolment for domestic students in Australian universities were growing at a remarkable pace over the past few years as there was a sharp rise in the trajectory of enrolments in the last decades. Huang (2012) notes that with quick economic growth and dramatic escalation in the number of scholars in higher learning institutions in various Asian states since the 1990s, higher education systems in these countries have evolved into the stage of mass higher education.

The Porter's five forces model is often used as a starting point to evaluate a company's position in its industry and to assess its level of competitiveness (Porter, 2008). This framework is general and appropriate to any business, it is good if it is used in a specific situation that applies directly to the business undertaking the assessment (Sifuna, 2014). Higher education industry today is in the business triangle that is

constantly subject to external pressures, like competitive forces from the domestic and international education providers, from both public and private higher education institutions (Ogutu, 2015). Porter's model of five forces pays specific consideration to five forces that affect any industry: threat of new entrants, intensity of rivalry, threat of substitutes, bargaining power of buyers and bargaining power of suppliers (Porter, 2008).



**Figure 2.1** The Five Forces That Shape Industry Competition (*Adapted from Porter, 2008.*)

Porter's five forces model can assist universities as they describe the parameters within that new rules, partakers and markets continue to surface (Dill, 2009). In Zimbabwe, colleges and universities compete for students, research support, faculty members and financial contributions, and this competition is becoming both increasingly aggressive and global (Pringle & Huisman, 2011). Understanding the industry's structure is, therefore, essential for effective strategic positioning, so that institutions can defend themselves against competition and shape them in their own favour (Porter, 2008).

Ormanidhi & Stringa (2008) argues that to succeed, the most relevant and important aspect of the competitive environment is the industry in that the firm contests. In Porter's language, the industry is the "arena" where struggle takes place (Porter, 2008). Considering Porters' study, industries

are encompassed with firms that yield close substitutes, but the firms' competitive atmosphere has a common structure involving the following five competitive forces:

New entrants to an industry bring new aptitude and a must to gain market stake that exerts pressure on the prices, costs, and the rate of investment necessary to compete. If barriers to entry keep on high, the threat of new entrants will be low (Pringle & Huisman, 2011). The threat of new entrants to the industry drives competition and impacts the industry's profitability (Porter, 2008). Anand (2012) observes that due to relatively loose governmental regulations in higher education sector, the sector is seeing an increase in the number of private universities resulting in increasing competition in the sector. More competition results in more efficiency, advanced quality, innovation, further differentiation and additional choice for customers (Mathooko & Ogutu, 2015).

The competition between firms determines the attractiveness of a sector. Companies struggle to maintain their power. The competition fluctuates basing on sector improvement, diversity and the presence of barriers to enter. In addition, it is an analysis of the number of competitors, products, brands, strengths and weaknesses, strategies and market shares (Chowdhury, 2008). In higher education industry, the intensity of rivalry depends on the objects of the competition that are students, teaching staff, donors or government-based funding and research money (Anand, 2012).

Besanko *et al.* (2013) observes that the availability of substitutes erode the demand for the industry's output. Complements boost industry demand. Once the price elasticity of demand is huge, pressure from substitutes will be important. Variations in demand can in affect internal competition and entry/exit. For the higher learning institutes, the most powerful and increasing force is the risk from the number of alternatives, particularly from distance education and online programmes, that have increased and increasing in numbers and with ICT, the competition is a global one (Anand, 2012). Competitors that offer substitutes often combine convenience, time and application, largely because of expanded delivery options made possible by technology. The availability of and demand for

substitutes for higher education is increasing (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009).

At universities, the buyer is the student or parent in the sense that they purchase education from an institution. The more options the buyer must choose from, the more power the buyer has (Porter, 2008). The new substitutes and the new entrants erode monopoly that traditional universities used to enjoy (Mathooko & Ogutu, 2015). Information such as academic reputation, physical aspects, institutional advertisements and brand image are common higher education selection criteria that allows buyers to compare services in terms of quality and breadth of offering (Hua, 2011). In an industry where options are plentiful, customers have more choices and buyer power increases such that services that are unique and provide a sustainable value to scholars will enhance to the bargaining influence to students (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009).

Population growth is the increase in the number of people that reside within a state or country (Espenshade & Tannen, 2015). *Ceteris paribus*, demography openly affects student enrolments in universities since the size of younger age cohorts is a partial determinant of the total number of learners who will enrol for universities (Stephan, 2008). This is supported by Odundo (2015) who noted that public universities in Kenya have recorded high enrolment rates in the past two decades due to pressure from the extended primary and secondary schooling and increased response for university education amongst the working populace.

This has also been advanced by Mohamedbhai (2014) when the author stated that since independence, the demographic situation in Sub-Saharan African countries has been categorised as having a rapid inhabitant's growth, a situation in that youth made an increasingly larger ratio. Effective measures taken in the 1980s to improve access to primary education resulted in a dramatic increase in output from that sector, and, in due course, increased secondary education enrolment and a steadily burgeoning proportion of secondary education graduates with legitimate expectations for tertiary education (Mwebi & Simatwa, 2013). Higher education institutes then faced huge political and public pressures to

increase their admissions, and they did that well beyond what they might accommodate in spite of serious shortages in human, physical, and monetary resources (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

A government policy statement is a declaration of a government's political activities, plans and intentions relating to a concrete cause (Waller *et al.*, 2009). Government policies have a greater contribution on enrolment expansion as Habibi & El-Hamidi (2016) notes that free university education and guaranteed jobs in the government sector for graduates were the main public policy implements that successive Egyptian governments since Nasser have used to garner popular support in urban areas.

Government policies play a major role in enrolment expansion at state universities. Kanyongo (2009) echoes that when Zimbabwe obtained its independence in 1980, one of its major policy was to extend education (and specifically higher education) to previously disadvantaged groups. This headed to huge pressure on the only university in the country, since a very good number of secondary school graduates were not capable to enrol for higher learning due to limited capability of the university to house the growing demand. This incited the formation of many universities across the country (Mawoyo, 2012). The expansion of university education in the country is continuing because even further state universities are desired to respond to the needs of quality and access in the higher learning sector (Kariwo, 2008).

Bordon *et al.* (2016) argues that government policies in Chile have a bearing on the enrolment expansion at universities. The authors posit that the enrolment growth in colleges was caused by a reform on the student loan program in 2006, that gave access to governmental loans to students enrolled in accredited state and private universities that lifted a significant barricade to entry into the higher learning market. As a result of reforms of this kind, the Chilean higher education system became highly decentralized and competitive.

University education includes all forms of studies, academic training or research or any training at the post – secondary level, provided by higher learning institutions and there is an unprecedented demand for university education globally (Cairns, 2015). Demand for university education includes the investment, consumption aspects, and the expected benefits that influence the proportion of persons who find it economically desirable (Madanji, 2014). Radner & Miller (2010) affirm that, an increase in the cost of education investment, whether in the form of direct charges for tuition or the opportunity costs of attending, may lead to a reduction in enrolment decisions. These authors emphasized that, increases in tuition fees at one institution may result in a re-allocation of students from that institution to another of comparable quality and size, but at lower prices.

Madanji (2014) observes that in Africa, demand for university education has been increasing rapidly in relation to meagre resources, the enrolment has been doubling in every five years that is the fastest rate of increase in the world. This has been prompted by the economic growth in respective African countries that needs university education. The demand for university education is a global phenomenon as countries in the Europe are also experiencing enrolment expansionism. This has also been affirmed by Romero & Rey (2009) who reiterated that the rapid growth of private higher education in response to high demand is a recent phenomenon in most European countries such that higher education market whether public or private university compete for students.

The continued demand for university education resulted in many universities. The government has then upraised the number of state universities to twenty-two by changing fifteen constituent universities to fully fledged campuses (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Also, there were 28 private universities with different levels of accreditations. Between 2000/01 and 2008/09, university admission in Kenya increased by 103% from 59,200 to 120,000 (Muindi, 2009). The number has since risen to 198,300 in 2011 (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

Higher education has currently become increasingly competitive, and many public colleges and universities have begun to adopt market-



oriented strategies as a result (Kristensen *et al.*, 2015). This competitive environment is determined by several things, including the progression in corporate and for-profit organisations, a buyers-market for learners, and advanced telecommunications delivery structures (Naidoo, 2016). As a result, more institutions contest with a recognisable group of other state, private and for-profit institutes for students. And competing for funding from state, corporate world, foundations, and other private sources (Leland & Moore 2009).

The landscape in higher learning institutions is changing. University education is being restructured by globalisation plus digital revolution. There is intensified competition for the portion of the international student market. Institutions are seeing a long-term effect from the universal financial crisis impacting both enrolment numbers and philanthropy, and students have increasing demands and expectations of their learning experience (Bryant, 2013).

Prospective undergraduates are becoming consumer-orientated and creating choices about education accordingly. University rankings will gradually have more effect on positioning universities in the international market, graduate career concern is an increasing student concern (Bordon *et al.*, 2016). Students are looking for access to services and education across new technologies and more flexible delivery options. To be competitive and to meet these expectations, universities will need to invest in expensive facilities and infrastructure. (Bryant, 2013).

Ultimately, a university's ability to differentiate itself in market, recruit a diverse student body, attract and retain staff of international distinction, secure multifaceted partnerships and generate philanthropic support will be key to surviving the challenges that the sector faces (Romero & Rey, 2009). In Chile, the government deregulated the higher education market that increased competition, as a result, universities massively expanded their network of campuses that intensified the competition between universities and rapidly increased enrolment (Bordon *et al.*, 2016).

Economic development is the process by that a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people (Fieldman *et al.*, 2014). Individuals become the agents of change in the process of economic development, they have the freedom to realise their potential (Soo, 2015). The role of education in human development is an important tool in any human society, it makes man develop faster than other creatures Aluede *et al.* (2012).

Improvement in quality of human resources increases efficiency and absorptive ability of the country and later refining economic improvement since higher levels of human capital development lead to increased economic growth (Mbelle & Katabaro, 2009). This was also upheld by Soo (2015) who asserts that the accumulation of human capital is widely perceived to be a key ingredient for increasing per capita income. As workers become more educated and more skilled, their productivity improves, hence raising income levels. It is this line of thought that has led to the rapid expansion of higher education across the developing world.

Kenya's university learning has witnessed drastic growth in enrolment since the gaining of independence as a result of the government's considerable placement of the significance of university education in promoting socio-economic and political development (Mukanji *et al.*, 2016). Accordingly Okebukola (2008) proffered that higher education provides high level human resources for driving the economy and ensuring rapid societal transformation. That is, the greater the chance given to the public for higher learning, the more extensive the horizon for fast social and economic development.

University education is an indispensable element for socioeconomic, political and technological development world over (Odundo *et al.*, 2015). Access to University education is not only one of the fundamental rights of an individual but also, and more importantly, a crucial tool for sustained socioeconomic development and an important exit route from poverty (*Ibid.*). It therefore, plays a crucial role towards achievement of a life of dignity and prosperity for all citizens. Besides, increased investment

in education, particularly at the university level is the most fundamental path to realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Privatization in reference to university education refers to a practice or tendency of institutions and colleges (both public and private) compelling on characteristics of, or operating norms associated with, private enterprises (Johnstone, 2010). Privatisation connotes a greater orientation to the student as a consumer, including the concept of the college education as a "product". Privatization also suggests the adoption of management practices associated with private business, such as contracting out, or outsourcing (Mamdani, 2008).

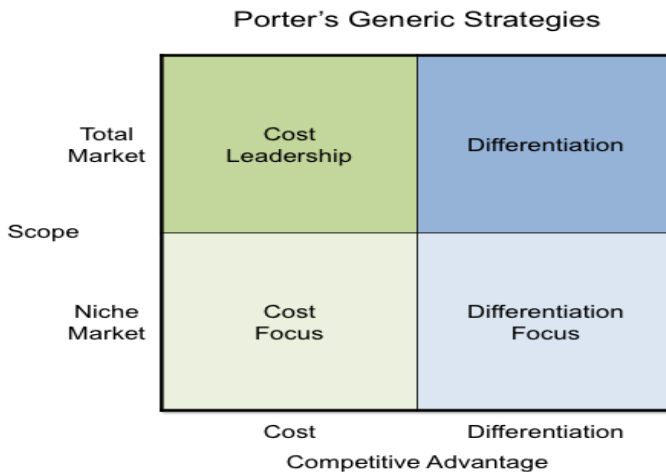
Privatisation can be a strategy to increase enrolments by universities. This is supported by Habibi & El-Hamidi (2016) when the authors observed that the economic crisis of the 1980s in Egypt forced the Egyptian government to reduce the fiscal burden of higher education by means of privatization reforms. Once a portion of the price of higher education has been shifted to private sector, the government permitted student enrolment to grow sharply in the 1990s. The government responded to the growing fiscal cost of higher education by issuing permits for private universities and by allowing public universities to generate revenue by offering some tuition-based degrees. These policies facilitated further increases in university enrolment.

Institutions of higher education in Chile went through a privatisation reform in the early 1980s. This reform modified the education system structure and its funding mechanisms, resulting in an expanded, more diverse and highly privatized system (Bordon *et al.*, 2016). The number of higher education institutions and enrolment in higher education programs increased significantly following this reform (*Ibid.*).

Mwebi & Simatwa (2013) also observed that in the 1990s, the World Bank concluded that the rate of social return on investments in tertiary education was lower than in basic and primary education and accordingly significantly reduced its tertiary education sector spending in Africa. This policy influenced other donor and development agencies to follow their

lead in reducing spending for tertiary education. This policy had severe repercussions, not only on the development of higher education, but also on development generally in Africa. Hence, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa suffered from abandonment and underfunding, thereby opting for privatization of universities (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

Porter's generic strategies model comprise of all those changes and approaches that a business has and is doing to attract consumers, withstand competitive stress and improve its position in the market (Porter, 1985). Competitive strategies are engaged by firms within a specific Industry. The strategies implemented are expected to be relating to performance of the company. There are three generic industry strategies that might be adopted to gain competitive advantage (Porter, 2008). Firms must use these competitive strategies to prepare them to overcome the competitive pressures that they face in the business where they operate (Sifuna, 2014). These generic strategies may help the organisation in coping with the five competitive forces in the business and do far much better than some competitors in the industry. The generic strategies include overall cost leadership, differentiation and focus (Porter, 2008).



**Figure 2.2:** Porter's Generic Strategies model (*Adopted from Auka, 2014*)

A strategy is about two things that are deciding where you want your business to go, and deciding how to get there (Tanwar, 2013). A comprehensive definition is based on competitive advantage. The object of most corporate strategy is competitive advantage that grows out of the value that a firm is able to create for its customers that surpasses the business's cost of creating it. Value is what consumers wish to pay for, superior value stems after offering lower fees than competitors for same benefits or providing distinctive benefits more than a higher price. Competitive strategies involve taking offensive or defensive actions to create a defendable position in the industry (Auka, 2014). Strategists should be aware of the cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies (Sifuna, 2014).

Kunc (2010:154) observes that the sources of cost leadership are varied and depend on the structure of the industry, but they are generally economies of scale or highly productive operational processes. If a firm can attain and sustain whole cost leadership, then it may achieve and have overall cost leadership. It will achieve beyond average profits provided it can charge fees at or near the business average (Porter, 1985). To achieve a low-cost advantage, public universities must have a low-cost leadership strategy, low-cost operations with integrated sections/business units, and a workforce committed to the low-cost strategy (Sifuna, 2014).

David (2011) notes that the public universities must be willing to discontinue any activities in that they do not have a cost advantage and should consider outsourcing activities to other public universities with a cost advantage. For an effective cost leadership strategy, public universities must have a large market share. There are many areas to achieve cost leadership such as mass production, mass distribution, economies of scale, technology, services and products design, input cost and capacity utilization of resources (Sifuna, 2014). Porter (1998) says only one firm in the industry can be a cost leader, if that is the only difference between a state university and its competitors, the best strategic choice is the low-cost leadership (David, 2011).

Differentiation strategy can be defined as a business strategy that seeks to build competitive advantage with its product or service by having it different from other available competitive products based on features, performance, or other factors not directly related to cost and price (Ouma & Oloko, 2015). The difference might be one that would be difficult to create and/or challenging to copy or imitate. The generic of differentiation approach involves producing a market position that is alleged as being exclusive industry-wide and sustainable over the long run (Porter, 2008).

Companies that follow a differentiation strategy may strive to make and market distinctive products for varied customer segments. They aim to produce a superior fulfilment of consumer needs in single or several product qualities to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty that often turns out to be used to charge a lowest price for the products (Ouma & Oloko, 2015). A firm that follows a differentiation strategy pursues to create a awareness in the minds of consumers that their products or services possess superior characteristics that are unique from those of its competitors in terms of image and reputation, reliability, design features and quality (Auka, 2014).

Greenley (2011) postulates that differentiation tends to reduce rivalry, increasing the possibility of building competitive advantages, whereas conformity improves the social support of stakeholders and therefore the legitimacy of the firm. Differentiation reduces competitiveness and the fight for scarce resources, thereby improving performance of public universities; but on the other hand, conformity makes all organizations similar and, therefore, the competitive pressures are stronger (Sifuna, 2014). Differentiation will generate benefits and dominant places that will last up until competitors copy a firm's key resources (Porter, 2008).

The focus a firm chooses refers to a specific segment or group of segments in the industry, as it attempts to achieve either cost advantage or differentiation, the premise is that needs of a segment could be better serviced through focusing entirely on it (Auka, 2014). A firm that does not have a complete competitive advantage optimizes on this strategy to serve the needs of the target segments and achieve a customer satisfaction

in them (David, 2011). The focus strategies namely, cost focus or differentiation focus relies on the differences of the given segment from the others in the industry. This involves tailoring the activities of a target segment exclusively to make sure that the needs of a specific segment are fully satisfied. Generic focus strategy is usually not achieved if a business tries to have two broad strategies simultaneously but instead risks being stuck at the middle (Porter, 2008). In the higher education sector, a state university using the focus strategy, targets a specific segment of the market (Porter, 2008). The public university can choose to focus on a select customer group, services and products range, geographical area, or service line (Murage, 2011).

Focus strategy aims at growing market share through operating in a niche market or in markets either not attractive to, or overlooked by, larger competitors (Sifuna, 2014). These niches arise from several factors including geography, buyer characteristics, and services and products specifications or requirements (*Ibid.*). An effective focus strategy depends on an industry segment big enough to have a good growth potential and not of key importance to other major competitors (Porter, 2008). Market penetration or market development can be an important focus strategy. Midsize and large public universities use focus-based strategies but only in conjunction with differentiation or cost leadership generic strategies (Sifuna, 2014). Focus strategies are most effective when consumers have distinct preferences and when the niche has not been pursued by rival public universities (David, 2011).

Performance of a university shows how the managers and governing body put into place and manage programmes (Anand, 2012). Accordingly, Hua (2011) states that the primary goals of universities are to improve the university's effectiveness and efficiency to improve the ability of the university to deliver its services and prosper in the market. Enrolment expansion has an impact on the performance of state universities.

Several researchers in Africa have also documented empirical evidence on the effects of enrolment expansion on performance of state universities. For instance, Mukanji *et al.* (2016) argues that Higher education in Kenya

has experienced tremendous growth since independence, consequently, there were concerns that have been raised about the instructional effectiveness and the quality of learning provided in state universities in Kenya. It was noted that while the student population was increasing, African governments' capability to offer monetary support to public services reduced and this suggests that quality of training in African universities was deteriorating because of increased enrolment against the reduced funding and universities in Kenya were also not an exception. This trend showed in the falling scholars scores on examinations, also reduced rigor on recruitment, promotion criteria, reduced research and and complaints by employers on the inability of university graduates to perform and achieve as per expected standards.

Odundo *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to establish the effects of enrolment expansion on in Nairobi. The study showed that sudden increment in students' enrolments resulted in additional administrative challenges to the University of Nairobi's governance structures. The challenges cited included, meeting the expanding need for infrastructure, sourcing of academic staff, staff welfare and remuneration, meeting training needs of staff and addressing students' welfare issues in time to uphold tranquillity. Other issues pointed out included management of registration, fees collection, inadequate and inappropriate lecture rooms for increased student population, inadequate staff and management of lecture schedules among others. Additional challenges included, managing the disciplinary process and addressing increasing discontent among staff on low remuneration against the increasing workload.

A similar study on effects of enrolment expansion on university performance was conducted in Nigeria by Ajayi & Adeniji (2009). The findings identified that enrolment expansion placed more burden and pressure on the university education system. The main problem was shortage of academic staff. The implications of this obvious short fall in the number of academic staff might include high lecturer - student ratio and pressure on the academic staff on ground. This short fall in the number of academic staff led to low productivity and decline in the quality of teaching in the Nigerian University System (Okebukola, 2009).



Basing on these findings, it can be argued that enrolment expansion has negative impacts on the performance of universities. The studies showed that the discordance between government funding and the rising enrolment had impacted negatively on development and operations of the universities. For instance, most capital development projects such as buildings, roads, parking lots, electrical installation, water installation and sewage maintenance were postponed (Odundo *et al.*, 2015).

High quality and relevant university education is able to equip students with knowledge, skills and core transferable competences that are necessary after graduation, this is achievable within a high-quality teaching environment that observes and supports good teaching (Matorera, 2016). Quality assurance allows people to have confidence in the quality of higher education (Garwe, 2014).

Studies on the impact of enrolment expansion on quality of university education were carried out by Reisberg & Rumbley (2011) who investigated on the challenges faced by Ethiopian university after enrolment growth. The findings identified that the major hinderance of quality education in Ethiopian universities was teacher-student ratio that grew because when the enrolment nearly quadrupled the teaching staff barely doubled. Quality was also constrained by infrastructure, the construction of classroom space, expansion of library collections, addition of computer laboratories, and the development of electronic networks lagged behind enrolment expansion.

At National Taiwan University, Chen & Chang (2010) conducted a study to establish the effects of enrolment expansion on quality of the university education. The findings showed that a crisis in higher education occurs because of inefficiency associated with unexpected outcomes due to the rapid enrolment expansion. When there is enrolment expansion without balanced development and improvement of instruction and learning facilities, staff and other resources, quality of education offered by the institutions could be compromised. The study concluded that reduced government funding coupled with increased enrolment without

commensurate improvement in available facilities poses a bigger challenge to quality education in Taiwanese universities.

A study that assessed the impact of effects of enrolment expansion on quality of university education in Italian universities at the University of Sapienza that offers Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors was conducted in Italy by Bianchi (2016). This study identified that the strategy of enrolment expansion led to overcrowding of universities, straining resources and reducing the quality of education. If university resources do not fully adjust to enrolment changes, educational expansion congests access to university inputs, lowers resources per student, and may decrease the quality of education. An enrolment increase, for example, may lower the amount of time that a teacher can dedicate to each student, increasing the probability that some students do not receive needed help with coursework. The overall conclusion was that enrolment expansion had a long-lasting negative effect on the returns to STEM degrees in Italy, quality was compromised through growth.

The allocation of resources in universities is important, it affects the quality and performance of higher education (Muindi, 2009). Several researchers were done globally on the impact of enrolment expansion on higher education resources such as Gudo *et al.* (2011) who carried a study on the effects of enrolment expansion on the adequacy of resources in public universities in Kenya. Their findings showed that as a result of increased enrolments, public universities in Kenya were experiencing overcrowding in hostels and classrooms that contributed to falling academic standards. As such, some students listen to lectures while standing outside the lecture halls. They also noted that the level of satisfaction among students in relation to lecture rooms was significantly low in public universities. The study reported overcrowding in public universities that hampers effective teaching and learning.

The study revealed that lack of proper sitting space results in lack of concentration and learner's attention to the lecturer who delivers a lesson, encouraging rote learning. These findings are supported by Misaro *et al.* (2013) who noted that as a result of the enrolment expansion witnessed in

the university education in Kenya, the number of students and teaching staff overwhelm library resources and local universities were forced to work under adverse conditions including shortage of resources for coaching and learning material as textbooks, journals and research equipment.

An investigation on the effects of enrolment expansion on higher education resources was done at the University of Adelaide in Australia (Byrant, 2013). The findings identified that the enrolment expansion of university education amid inadequate provision of teaching and learning facilities poses serious challenges on the instructional effectiveness. Other identified findings were of some resource challenges that included food security, sustainable energy and abundant clean water at the university. The university, however, intended to build several new facilities such as a new integrated medical, nursing, dental school and the campus and to intensify the use of their existing spaces.

Another study on the impact of enrolment expansion at Makerere University in Uganda was done by Court (2009). The findings noted that though Makerere University had more than doubled student enrolment, it prompted major improvements in the physical buildings, academic infrastructure and extremely reduced its traditional monetary dependence upon the state. The university had a restructuring reform that had three central and interrelated elements that were implementing alternative financing strategies, installing new management structures and introducing demand driven courses. This helped Makerere university to have a diversified financial base and reduced its reliance on government by encouraging privately sponsored students, commercialising service units and institutionalizing consultancy arrangements. Educational resources were adequate. Quality of education was achieved. The overall outcome of this study is that that enrolment expansion and the maintenance of quality can be achieved simultaneously if the management are able to run income generating reforms.

Several researchers in Africa have also documented empirical evidence on the effects of enrolment expansion on skills of graduates. For instance,

Habibi & El-Hamidi (2016) conducted a study to establish the effects of enrolment expansion on the skills of graduates in Egypt. The findings identified that higher education reform that was adopted in 2009 had no restriction on increasing student enrolment. As a result of the expansion witnessed in the university education there was deficiency of resources for learning and teaching material such as research equipment, textbooks and journals. This caused lowering of academic values and quality of graduates who were found to be deficient in written documents, communication and technical proficiency that make them unfit for the job market. University education in Egypt has been accused of churning graduates who are not adequately equipped with the desired competencies required in the world of work. The overall outcome of this study is that the poor quality of university education in Egypt is one of the reasons that university graduates could not find adequate employment.

In the Chinese university industry, Soo (2015) also conducted a study to establish the effects of enrolment expansion on the graduate skills and the findings established that the Chinese university sector have been affected by enrolment expansion in public universities. Colleges ended up taking students with lower passes to enter universities due to enrolment expansion and as a result, the average university graduate just pass the degree with a pass hence this affects the skills of the graduates in the world of work.

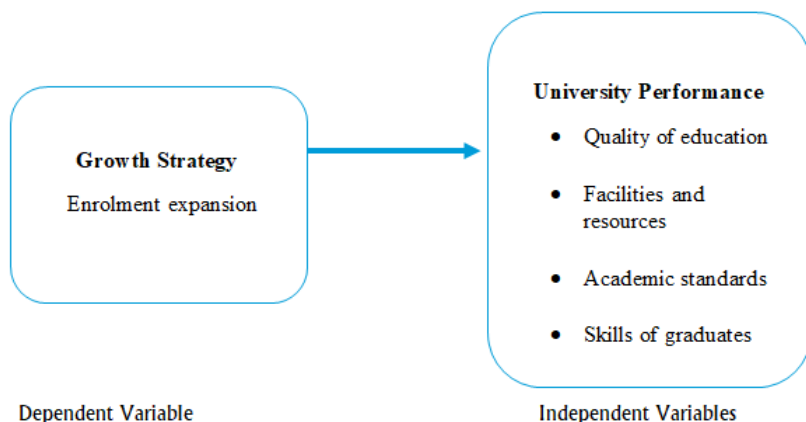
Muindi (2009) investigated on the impact of enrolment expansion on graduate skills at Maseno University in Kenya. The findings showed that there was insufficient provision of teaching resources that match the growing enrolment due to inadequate finance. Consequently, this has led to high student-lecturer ratios that hamper instructional effectiveness in the universities. This state led stakeholders raising questions on the teaching processes and quality of learning provided at Maseno University that have been accused of producing half-baked graduates (Muindi, 2009). Basing on this finding, it can be argued that enrolment expansion at universities leads to inadequate resources that affects graduate skills as supported by Mukwenji *et al.* (2016) that some Kenya universities were

churning graduates who were not adequately equipped with the desired competencies required in the world of work.

Although literature on enrolment expansion is widespread both in Africa and in Europe, evidence on the impact of enrolment expansion in universities is not congruent. Findings from both the African studies and the European studies indicate varied and to some extent conflicting results for example the impact of enrolment expansion on resources at Makerere University differs from other findings. The reviewed literature has managed to establish a trend of the impact of enrolment expansion. It has negative impact on the performance of university education, quality of university education and skills of graduates. Court (2009) identified positive effects of enrolment expansion on university performance and argues that it does not affect the quality of education.

This contrast suggests a need to add the Zimbabwean favour with particular reference to the university education in Zimbabwe. There is need to establish how the Zimbabwe findings will fit or link with the aforesaid studies. This need is born out of the realisation that whilst some studies affirm positive impact of enrolment expansion, Mukanji *et al.* (2016) among others find negative impact of enrolment expansion. What is apparent in these studies is that none of them focused on the Midlands State University. This is the major inherent gap that this study is covering. Although some of these studies were done in the African continent, no studies have been done to investigate into the effects of enrolment expansion on state universities in Zimbabwe as a strategy for survival.

A conceptual framework is a figure that shows the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. In this study the dependent variable is the performance of state universities while the independent variable is the survival strategy that is the enrolment expansion. Based on the reviewed literature, the researcher developed a conceptual framework shown below as figure 2.3:



**Figure 2.3** Conceptual framework (*Author compilation*)

This chapter reviewed literature related to the objectives and research questions of the study to familiarise with the phenomenon at pre-analysis stage. It is apparent that so far many studies have explored the impact of enrolment expansion on university performance. Most of the reviewed literature on enrolment expansion from Africa, China and Europe. Thus, this study had a launch pad from that to embark. The literature review was intended to help attain insights on methodology, theories and data to facilitate a comparative analysis for broadening our readership of the salient issues. In the chapter a conceptual framework was developed in line with the identified research gap. Chapter three provides the methodologies that will be used in exploring the outcomes of enrolment expansion on university performance.