

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE AND  
MANAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE'S COLLEGES OF  
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:  
ISSUES FOR REVITALISATION**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**of**

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

**by**

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October 2001

## ABSTRACT

This research was carried out in order to gain a better understanding of the practice of governance in a technical or vocationally oriente d college and the cri tical role played b y the principal a s a college manager within the governance system in which industrialists an d head office are also key players.

Conceptual literature relating to issues of governance and management within the education sce nario is examined. The wider issues of governance are critically analysed in the context of powe r and control mechanisms initiated by the Ministry of Highe r Education as the responsible authority for the college s. The influence of the industrial sector as the consumers of skilled labour force is analysed through college advisory councils set up in terms of the relevant pieces of legislation.

The research is qualitative and takes t he form of thre e case studies of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe. Data were collected through multiple methods from var ied sources with a view to ensuring triangulation. The multiple-case design enabled me to dig beneath the surface of what apparently happens in thes e organisations and unearth issues and concerns at the wide r governance and management levels. Views and experiences o f participants are captured and explained through in-depth interviews, observations and documentary sources. Results are discussed i n relation to the re levant literature al lowing grounded t heory to emerge.

The research highlights the roles of key players in governance and the issues of relationships among these actors. What emerges is a desperate situation of ineffectiveness, problematic processes in governance and poor responsiveness of these colleges to the labour market demands.

The potential for generalisability and transferability is discussed in the report and possible corrective intervention strategies are recommended. The thesis demonstrates that managers of these colleges and indeed senior officers in head office who are at the centre of governance and will need transformational leadership development in order for them to come to terms with such things as people's feelings, abandoning 'outdated' policies, managing change, and handling communication effectively. Various strategies for revitalisation of governance and management in technical and vocational colleges are suggested.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful acknowledgements are due to the Permanent Secretary for Higher Education, Dr M.N. Mambongo for readily allowing me to conduct the research in his Ministry and to the principals, industrialists, college staff and students who participated in this research.

I am further deeply indebted to my supervisor, Professor Hennie van der Mescht for his expert guidance, his continued supervision and encouragement throughout and his analytical but diplomatic critiques. I felt humbled and greatly inspired by him.

The unfailing enthusiasm and moral support of my family were all priceless. The fact that they were prepared to tolerate my long hours of absence played a huge role in the completion of this study. I owe my wife Margaret special thanks.

My thanks are due to staff in the Education Department at Rhodes University including Dr Clive Smith, and the librarians Judy and Mweru for assisting me in accessing relevant literature upon request and invariably during awkward times.

Special gratitude is extended to the Ernest Oppenheimer Scholarship Trust for sponsoring the fieldwork, which involved travelling to Zimbabwe from Lesotho, hotel accommodation and procurement of stationery materials.

My deep gratitude also goes to Ms Nancy Matare for professionally and neatly word-processing the chapters during her spare time and offering her unwavering assistance at the documentation stage.

Most importantly I owe special thanks and praise to the Good Lord our God without whose holistic help and mercy, nothing like a Ph.D would be possible for me.

## DEDICATION

*To all those principals who feel neglected and “...lonely and have to go home and sleep over tough decisions ...”*

Quote from a Principal (August 1999)

You have been a source of great inspiration to me as you frantically head and manage those technical institutions without adequate resources, support and appropriate leadership skills. Your continued commitment provides hope for skills development in Zimbabwe.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	III
DEDICATION .....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	XIII
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Situating Myself in this Research.....	1
1.2 Context .....	5
1.3 Background.....	5
1.3.1 Zimbabwe’s Shifting Political Landscape (1999-2001) ....	6
1.3.2 Political Implications for Tertiary, Vocational and Technical Education.....	11
1.3.3 Technical and Vocational Education .....	14
1.4 Nature of the Problem and Purpose of the Study .....	15
1.5 Goals and Assumptions of the Research .....	16
1.6 Significance of the Research .....	17
1.7 Research Location .....	20
1.8 Rationale for the Selection of the Case Studies and Socio- Cultural Impetus.....	22
CHAPTER TWO.....	28
REVIEW OF RELATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	28
2.1 Introduction .....	28
2.2 Conception of Governance in Education.....	29
2.3 Models of College Governance .....	34
2.4 Technical and Vocational Colleges as Organisations .....	48

2.5 Accountability in College Governance .....	54
2.6 Comparing Management and Leadership in Educational Governance .....	59
2.7 Tasks and Theories in College Management and Development .....	65
2.8 Individual Actors' Interpretation of their Role in Governance .....	72
2.8.1 The Principal, the Individual and the Manager .....	73
2.8.2 The Industrialist behind the College .....	80
2.8.3 The Man in Head Office .....	82
2.9 Conclusion .....	84
CHAPTER THREE .....	87
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	87
3.1 Research Methodology and Process.....	87
3.2 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach.....	89
3.3 Rationale for Multiple Case Studies .....	91
3.4 Preparation for the Field Investigation .....	94
3.5 Data Gathering.....	97
3.5.1 Triangulation of Data Sources .....	97
3.5.2 Triangulation of Methods.....	98
3.5.3 Interviews.....	99
3.5.4 Documentary Sources .....	102
3.5.5 Observations .....	103
3.6 Validity and Reliability.....	104
3.7 Generalisability and Transferability .....	106
3.8 Ethical Issues in the Research Process .....	107
3.9 Data Process .....	110
3.10 Data Presentation and Analysis .....	112



CHAPTER FOUR .....	115
CASE STUDY OF WESTGATE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE	
.....	115
4.1 Introduction .....	115
4.2 Background.....	116
MISSION STATEMENT.....	118
4.3 Nature of Governance and Management.....	121
4.4 Brief Profile of the Principal .....	124
4.5 Analysis of the Principal’s Interview Responses .....	126
4.5.1 Setting an Entrepreneurial Role.....	127
4.5.2 Managing Internal Operations .....	130
4.5.3 Participatory Approach to Management .....	132
4.5.4 Setting a Culture of Communicating and Problem-Solving	
.....	135
4.5.5 Managing Relationships with Industry.....	138
4.5.6 Managing a Problematic Relationship with Head Office	
.....	141
4.6 Analysis of the Industrialist’s Interview Responses.....	146
4.6.1 Advising the College through Interaction.....	146
4.7 Analysis of Head Office’s Interview Responses.....	150
4.7.1 Transformational Imperatives from Directions to Reforms	
.....	151
4.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources .....	157
4.9 Observations .....	162
4.10 Triangulation and Summary of Findings .....	165
CHAPTER FIVE .....	168
CASE STUDY OF KWEKWE TECHNICAL COLLEGE.....	168
5.1 Introduction .....	168

5.2 Background.....	169
5.3 Nature of Governance and Management.....	174
5.4 Status and Profile of the Principal.....	177
5.5 Analysis of the Principal’s Interview Responses .....	179
5.5.1 Policy Transmitting Role .....	179
5.5.2 Problems in the Management of Internal Operations ..	182
5.5.3 Managing Relations with the Private Industrial Sector	184
5.5.4 Managing a College with Manpower Gaps .....	185
5.5.5 Managing a Complex Relationship with Head Office ...	187
5.5.6 Managing College Staff with Connections in Head Office .....	191
5.5.7 Setting a Spiritual Climate among Students.....	193
5.5.8 Managing with Limited Funds .....	194
5.5.9 Occupying a Stressful Position as Principal .....	195
5.6 Analysis of the Industrialist’s Interview Responses.....	197
5.6.1 Ineffective Relationships between the College and the Industrial Sector .....	198
5.7 Analysis of Head Office’s Interview Responses.....	201
5.7.1 Organisational Systems and Relationships Needing Rehumanising.....	201
5.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources.....	205
5.9 Observations .....	208
5.10 Triangulation and Summary of Findings .....	210
CHAPTER SIX .....	214
CASE STUDY OF HARARE POLYTECHNIC.....	214
6.1 Introduction .....	214
6.2 Overview Background.....	216
MISSION AND PROGRAMMES .....	217
ENROLMENT CAPACITY AND TRENDS.....	219
6.3 Nature of Governance and Management.....	220

6.4 Brief Profile of the Principal .....	223
6.5 Analysis of the Principal’s Interview Responses .....	226
6.5.1 Principal’s Key Role: Planning and Checking on College Systems .....	226
6.5.2 Managing Change through Research .....	228
6.5.3 Managing the Teaching and Learning Process through a Board of Studies.....	230
6.5.4 Managing the Relationship and Interaction with the Private Industrial Sector .....	231
6.5.5 Managing a Difficult Relationship with Head Office ....	233
6.5.6 Dealing with Conflicts through Laid Down Procedures and Rules.....	235
6.5.7 Managing College Funds in Rising Inflation .....	239
6.6 Analysis of the Industrialist Interview Responses .....	241
6.6.1 Dealing with a College Losing its “Return on Investment”. .....	242
6.6.2 Advising in a Desperate Relationship .....	245
6.7 Analysis of Head Office’s Interview Responses.....	248
6.7.1 Interaction in a “Let’s Wait and See” Situation .....	249
6.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources .....	252
6.9 Observations .....	257
6.10 Triangulation and Summary Findings.....	259
CHAPTER SEVEN .....	262
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA IN THE CASE STUDIES	262
7.1 Introduction .....	262
7.2 Goals of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Context of Governance of Technical and Vocational Colleges .....	263
7.2.1 Mission Analysis.....	264
7.2.1 Legislative Framework in Governance .....	266
7.2.2 Power and Influence in Governance .....	270

7.3	Principalship: Role Analysis.....	273
7.3.1	Management of Self.....	274
7.3.2	Management of Internal Operations.....	275
7.3.3	Management of the External Environment.....	277
7.3.4	Management of Students and Staff.....	278
7.4	Collaboration between the Colleges and Head Office.....	280
7.5	Collaboration between the Colleges and the Industrial Sector .....	282
7.6	Summary.....	284
CHAPTER EIGHT.....		286
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		286
8.1	Introduction.....	286
8.2	Research Questions.....	286
8.3	The Place of Theory in the Research.....	289
8.4	A Synopsis of Related Theory and Research Findings.....	289
8.4.1	The Governance System.....	290
8.4.2	The Principal as the Manager.....	292
8.4.3	The Principal as the Leader.....	295
8.4.3	Management of Relationships with Industry: Role Ambiguity.....	298
8.4.5	Management of Relationships with Head Office: Role Conflict.....	300
8.4.5	Limitations in the Effective Governance of a Technical/Vocational College.....	302
8.5	Recommendations for Revitalisation.....	303
8.5.1	Personal Reflection of the Principal.....	303
8.5.1	Leadership Empowerment.....	304
8.5.2	Transformation of Head Office.....	305
8.5.3	Review of Legal Instruments.....	305
8.5.5	Review of the Principal's Job Description.....	306

8.5.6 Participation of Industry through a Shared Vision .....	307
8.5.7 Synergetic Leadership of Head Office and Colleges .....	308
8.5.8 Interventions for Governance Responsiveness .....	309
8.6 Limitations of the Study .....	310
8.7 Suggestions for Further Research .....	311
8.8 Concluding Remarks .....	312
8.9 Post Script: Developments after the Research .....	313
REFERENCES.....	318
APPENDICES .....	330

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Reference is made to certain terms, acronyms and abbreviations in this report and in the Zimbabwean context of technical and vocational education. I need to clarify these accordingly:

CAC	College Advisory Council
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
Head	Refers to the head of an engineering department who reports to the principal through the vice principal and is responsible for all the programmes taking place in his/her respective department.
HND	Higher national diploma
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NAMACO	National Manpower Advisory Council
ND	National Diploma
NC	National Certificate
PSC	Public Service Commission
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SRC	Students Representative Council
Technical/Vocational Colleges	Vocationally oriented colleges offering both skills training and technical education aimed at preparing students to become artisans or technicians at the Craft Certification level and at the National Diploma level
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
ZANU (PF) (Patriotic Front)	Zimbabwe African National Union

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Yet to learn about people we must remember to treat them as people and they will uncover their lives to us (Fontana and Frey 1994: 324).

### 1.1 Situating Myself in this Research

It is appropriate to explain how I fit into this research and the fundamental issues that triggered my interest in this field of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe.

In the last eighteen years of my working life in the fields of education and manpower development, I have had the unique opportunity of handling different jobs in different places in two specific areas namely technical education and teacher education. I have been engaged in teaching and training young people in vocational and technical education on the basis of my engineering background. Later on I was moved to various fields involving designing curriculum, supervising curriculum design systems, managing and overseeing national examination processes, setting up technical and vocational institutions involving recruitment of staff, procurement of equipment and planning and designing curriculum frameworks. For six years I was assigned to set up a teacher training college (Chinhoyi Technical Teacher's College) which was to be the 'unique' institution for the production of highly skilled teachers of vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe.

In the last three years of my career in education, the government of Zimbabwe felt that I could assist another country to develop its own systems of technical education. The issue featured heavily in the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) summit discussions. Essentially countries like Lesotho and Swaziland have depended heavily on South Africa for accreditation of their examinations and production of skilled manpower. Following the independence of South Africa in 1994, these countries approached the World Bank for assistance through SADC.

As we entered into 1997, I received the fearful, exciting but emotional and highly motivational news that I had been appointed to go and work in Lesotho on secondment to the World Bank as an Advisor on Technical and Vocational Education. Among other things, I was tasked with setting up accreditation systems, programmes, industrial training boards and leadership programmes for the upgrading and development of a new cadre of principals.

In the course of activities, I was brought face to face with vivid moments of reflection on the situation back home in Zimbabwe. Each time I made frantic efforts to at least get some newspapers, I would invariably feel saddened by reports of strike action, colleges being closed down, principals getting hospitalised and within a year, two principals having died of stress related illnesses. I was deeply saddened by the thought of Zimbabwe, a small country with too few colleges and too few principals, continuing with what seemed like an unequal struggle.

Out of these moments of reflection, I then remembered how I had worked to set up a teacher training college, the many meetings I had had with principals of teachers' colleges, and how excited they had



all felt about their jobs. I had grown to admire these people, their elegance and the 'outward integrity' they displayed. On the one hand these people were visible leaders in the communities out there in the outskirts of big cities where the institutions were situated. On the other hand vocational and technical education was a new phenomenon among the blacks who had been excluded prior to the attainment of independence in 1980. New technical and vocationally oriented institutions had only been set up in the late eighties and black principals had been appointed through a government policy directive. The tension brought about by this conflict would soon take its toll.

The results of these developments could be seen in people's eyes, in the national print media and in meetings. Paradoxically, principals of these 'unique' institutions wore unpleasant faces, which spoke of frustrations. Some of my saddest memories are of meetings geared towards ratifying curriculum documents which I chaired in my capacity as Chief Education Officer in charge of curriculum and examinations. Those meetings were often characterised by tension and unhappiness, as a result of much 'finger pointing of inefficiencies' by head office personnel. Of course the 'guilty parties' were invariably the principals.

In my job situation in Lesotho, I stumbled across exciting literature on management, governance and leadership in my activities of upgrading and training principals and directors. I laid my hands on writings (Wamahiu 1988; Bernstein 1975 and Sergiovanni *et al.* 1987) which confirmed my anxiety that the relationship between the home and the school had been researched and documented in sociological literature, whereas the complex relationship involving school, government and the private sector had not received much

attention. I felt touched by this discovery, from that moment. Each time I would wake up and prepare seminar papers for developing the principal of Lesotho, I felt someone had to do something about the sad Zimbabwean situation.

How, what and where, were issues that boggled my mind until I met the late Dr Forbes Madzongwe on one of my visits to Zimbabwe. Here was a man lecturing education administration at the University of Zimbabwe's faculty of education who confirmed in our discussion that the issues of technical and vocational colleges had to do with people's attitudes rather than administration. Dr Madzongwe had worked previously as an under secretary in government and had been responsible for administration in the area of manpower planning and development. I drove back home to Lesotho feeling inspired that I would talk to Rhodes University and pursue studies in educational management and leadership.

I felt great moments of exhilarating discovery when I was going through a process of self-reflection and realising the need to pursue academic research in this field. Literature confirmed to me that:

... education should be organic and its managers should be people oriented, since it is the people who form the clientele base (Murgatroyd and Morgan 1994:98).

Against this background I felt I had to be part of the change process in technical and vocational education, where King (1989: 118) points out "...it is a question of education and employment". If it is 'marriage' and a system that is organic in nature, then it should be organic enough to detect ecological changes in the clientele's demands. I felt that perhaps the system was not responding to such

stimuli because it was about structures rather than people. Armed with this broad assumption, inspiration and challenge I decided to embark on this research journey.

## 1.2 Context

In this chapter of the research, I shall attempt to provide some background information, the purpose and potential significance of this report. The specific field of investigation is governance and the management role occupied by the principal in the administration of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe. The research approach guiding the study draws on the interpretive paradigm. The process used to look into unanticipated issues and insights involves case studies of three technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe.

## 1.3 Background

A brief examination of the educational scenario in Zimbabwe (Secretary for Manpower Planning and Development 1981) shows that in 1980, at independence, government embarked on an expansion programme of technical and vocational education by increasing institutions from two to ten. As may be seen from a previous study (Mbizvo 1994), this was geared towards making technical and vocational education more accessible to the majority of people and increasing the skilled labour force needed to sustain commerce and industry. Amidst this impressive expansion and growth, during the past ten years of the post independence era, the national print media have featured issues and concerns in respect of problems emerging in technical colleges. I elaborate on these in the next section.

### 1.3.1 Zimbabwe's Shifting Political Landscape (1999-2001)

As I was writing this report between January 2001 and August 2001 Zimbabwe was going through rapid political changes whose implications for education cannot be ignored. In the change process there was polarisation in many quarters and large-scale trauma became commonplace. In this section of the report I attempt to provide the background to this shifting political landscape.

The last three years (1999-2001) have witnessed significant political changes on the Zimbabwean landscape. The ultimate result of these political shifts has been a permanent change that has been etched on the political landscape which is now characterised by the existence of a strong opposition political movement.

The major factors contributing to the reshaping of the Zimbabwean political landscape included the following: -

- expiry of the Lancaster House constitutional guarantees for the minority white race;
- the growing expectations of the indigenous population, particularly access to the means of production;
- impact and consequences of economic liberalisation;
- global and regional geo-political changes;
- redistribution of the land and farm invasions.

The first and most important political change in post-independent Zimbabwe was the expiry of the constitutional agreements for the minority white race's participation in Zimbabwean politics which was marked by the amendment of the Zimbabwean Constitution in 1990.

Thereafter the minority white population had to maintain or lobby for its socio-economic interests through the ruling party – Zanu (PF). Hence, in the absence of a viable opposition party, various industrial and professional associations became the vehicles of maintaining the political and socio-economic interests of the white minority. These associations succeeded in lobbying the Zanu (PF) government which by and large, especially after the unity accord of 1997, represented the interests of the majority of the indigenous Zimbabwean population. As a result the majority ruling party – Zanu (PF) - found itself consciously or unconsciously having to play an intricate political game of balancing white minority interests against black majority interests with a view to maintaining national political stability and socio-economic progress at the same time. It therefore became apparent that the task before government was neither easy nor enviable.

Conceding to minority white interests meant implied delayed realisation of national liberation expectations, which included rewarding and recognising the war veterans' role in the liberation of Zimbabwe by economically empowering the indigenous population through land redistribution. Keeping the interests of all groups balanced seemed the best choice for the government of the day. However, as in any balancing act, a tilt of the balance was inevitable.

In any political analysis it is important to remember the fundamental principle (axiom) that economic interests underpin all other social and political relations in society. Therefore, in my view, the inevitable misbalance or disequilibrium in the Zimbabwean politics was precipitated by drastic political changes in the global and regional environment which took place in the early 1990s culminating in the economic global restructuring of the late 90s. The first and foremost

factor underlying global economic and political change during the past two decades was the dominance of liberal and neo-liberal economic thought. Its embracement by the vanguard international development institutions resulted in a whole sale/mass implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) in the less developed countries.

The economic adjustment programmes implemented (1991 -1995 in Zimbabwe) were underpinned by the liberal economic school's principal assertion that economies (developing economies included ) perform better and grow faster under laissez faire. Hence the programmes emphasised the reduction of the role of government and public sector in the economy while fostering that of the private sector. Furthermore, domestic and external trade were both liberalised.

The adverse impact of trade liberalisation manifested itself, on one hand, in the collapse of many Zimbabwean firms due to external competition. This led to increasing rates of inflation and unemployment. Attempts by government to reduce its expenditure through rationalisation of the civil service, commercialisation and privatisation of parastatals only served to worsen the unemployment situation, thereby causing a further deterioration in the welfare of the working class and ordinary Zimbabweans. Furthermore, due to the amendment of various labour relations regulations during the implementation of ESAP, the labour movement in Zimbabwe lost some legal protection that it had hitherto enjoyed.

In a nutshell ESAP in Zimbabwe, as has been the case in most less developed countries, led to polarisation of society. Those in possession of the means of production grew wealthier while the

working class and the rest got worse off, resulting in an increasing proportion of the population falling below the poverty datum line. Under the circumstances a political realignment in the Zimbabwean politics became inevitable, especially after the ruling party had either consciously or inadvertently divorced itself from the working class.

Thus to a greater extent the changed political landscape in Zimbabwe could be viewed as a direct consequence of changes in the international environment which were transformed into the Zimbabwean national economy through ESAP.

The other factors that combined with the above to permanently change the Zimbabwean political landscape were, by and large, political in nature. The collapse of the socialist economies in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union left vacuums in the spheres of socio-economic development theory and policy-making on one hand, and global and regional geopolitics on the other. Zimbabwe had started (1980) with a Socialist-Marxist approach.

In an environment of a single superpower, the USA and its Western allies began to assert their geopolitical interests in the various regions of the globe, including the Congo basin. The leading role taken by the Zimbabwean government to withstand the advancement of western interests in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) infuriated western governments who then responded by slapping sanctions on Zimbabwe. Britain and its Western allies then took it upon themselves to force Zanu (PF) out of power in Zimbabwe. This task they attempted to accomplish by: \_

- withdrawing financial support for the Land Resettlement Programme;
- thwarting Zimbabwe of foreign currency inflows;
- financing the disenchanted working class/labour movement to form an opposition party.

The combination of the above factors ultimately resulted in the present political landscape in Zimbabwe which is characterised by the existence of a bipartisan parliament of two major parties: On one hand the ruling Zanu (PF), which is a national liberation party of twenty-two (22) years of government experience drawing its support from within Zimbabwe and the region; and on the other hand, MDC – a movement for democratic change that was recently formed under the auspices of western capital, drawing its support from the Anglo-Saxon metropolises and headed by the former head of the umbrella labour movement.

The land issue created a somewhat volatile discourse *vis-à-vis* the Lancaster House Agreement, the views and stance of the Western media, referred to as “Lawlessness and the Laws in Zimbabwe”. In that environment many suffered heavy losses as a result of farm invasions. Some were traumatized; others adjusted to the prevailing circumstances and carried on with their normal businesses.

It is therefore apparent that Zimbabwe has moved into a new phase of post-independence politics. Whereas the first phase was characterised by national liberation politics that was underpinned by a greater sense of unity among the indigenous population, the new (second) phase is characterised by a division of interests in the



population along the lines of rural -peasantry and urban -working class with the former colonial interests playing a catalyst role.

What seems to be certain is that the present political scenario may last for decades, and as a result, this new political landscape poses numerous challenges to all Zimbabwean political, social and economic sectors.

### 1.3.2 Political Implications for Tertiary, Vocational and Technical Education

It cannot be disputed that the education system plays a central role in society. Its critical role is particularly visible in the formation of an individual's perception of self, the immediate environment and the world. Thus, besides arming the individual with livelihood skills, and society with a base and means for development and technological advancement, education has the primary role of forming and maintaining an ideology, individual, class and national consciousness

It is therefore expected that in a dynamic political environment where various social groups vie for power, the education system cannot remain in tact. It will always be vulnerable to constant changes as it adapts to the social, economic and political challenges of the day.

The Zimbabwe technical education system which was still in its infancy did not therefore remain untouched by the economic and political changes of the past decade, and particularly changes of the recent four years. A brief perusal of the Zimbabwean newspaper

publications in recent years reveals that the dominant issues in the tertiary education sector are related to the problems of: -

- issues of curriculum relevance;
- violent student demonstrations;
- stagnant student allowances in the wake of inflation;
- privatisation of catering services in institutions of higher learning;
- questionable standards;
- alleged corruption;
- lack of adequate funding.

The major policy changes that took place in technical colleges after I had completed collecting data were: -

- static (unrevised) government education grants and loans available for technical college students and universities;
- privatisation of catering services in all government colleges;
- yearly inadequate budgets for technical and vocational education.

These major policy shifts were a result of government's implementation of ESAP which emphasised the reduction of the budget deficit. Even the education sector was not spared the pain of government's austerity measures. The non-revision of government grants and loans placed both the institutions and college students under severe stress in the wake of inflation. Given that these policy changes were being imposed on institutions and students by government, college students became more and more agitated against college authorities and government. For a greater part of the

period under review (1998-2001) some college students resorted to violent demonstrations, which often left some colleges closed (The Herald, 3 June 2000) and inevitably resulted in the prolongation of the duration of study.

In most cases student demonstrations culminated in anti-government demonstrations and in the wake of the MDC a significant part of the student population - especially its leadership, the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) - became politicised and was often viewed as *de facto* youth league of MDC. It is therefore important to note that ESAP did not only succeed in alienating Zanu (P F) from its strong constituency of the working class but succeeded in doing the same with the student population.

The abovementioned problems and issues give a cue to the challenges posed by Zimbabwe's new political environment. In my view some of the major challenges are:-

- create better conditions that are conducive to learning in institutions of higher education and in technical colleges;
- de-politicise institutions;
- revitalise management of colleges;
- revitalise relationships between colleges, head office and the industrial private sector;
- widen the financial base of colleges by instilling a sense of creativity among college heads;
- make courses more responsive to market demands;
- establish and maintain a coherent national education system that is oriented to the practical needs of the nation.

As Zimbabwe seeks a new political equilibrium position finding solutions to the above problems and challenges is a primary responsibility of not only policy-makers in the education sector, but a critical role of the leaders and heads of vocational and technical institutions. It is important to realise that the special field of technical and vocational education is far more demand (industry) driven than the more politically driven field of general education.

### 1.3.3 Technical and Vocational Education

A brief examination of the education scenario in Zimbabwe (Secretary for Manpower Planning and Development 1981) shows that in 1980, at independence, government embarked on an expansion programme of technical and vocational education by increasing institutions from two to ten. As may be seen from a previous study (Mbizvo 1994), this was geared towards making technical and vocational education more accessible to the majority of people and increasing the skilled labour force needed to sustain commerce and industry.

The concern of government, as highlighted in several policy documents was also to create a pool of skilled manpower who would cover the gap that was being created by the growing numbers of white skilled manpower leaving the country. Perhaps this was resulting from fears of a new government bent on the ideals of socialism and Marxism. Whilst all this expansion was going on, a new breed of black college heads was being appointed to run the newly established technical colleges. Amidst this impressive expansion and growth, during the past ten years of post independence era, the national print media have featured issues and

concerns in respect of problems emerging in technical colleges. I elaborate on these in the next section.

#### 1.4 Nature of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Amongst some of the issues reported in the media are : student unrest over poor allowances (stipends), poor living conditions, the uncaring attitude of management, low morale amongst staff, a relatively high students drop-out rate, the abuse of authority by staff and/or management, mismatch between curriculum content and labour market demands.

Whilst all this was happening, the principal appears to have received the largest portion of blame from government and from industry. I question this almost automatic finger pointing, and suggest that the complexity of the principal's role may not have been fully appreciated. I believe that in an attempt to maintain a balance and effectively manage the institution, the principal of a technical or vocational college in Zimbabwe is faced with enormously varied and challenging interests from various stakeholders, in his endeavours to exercise his management role. In this way the various aspects of social reality will influence his/her management effectiveness. Thus, as argued by Van der Westhuizen (1991:129):

The arithmetical, cinematic, the organic, the sensitive, that which can be organised, the analytical, the economic, the aesthetic, the regulative, the ethical, convictions of the external environment/community play a part in the educational management of an institution.

Such issues appear to suggest that management of a technical or vocational institution is made more complex by government policy on

the one hand and the expectations of industry on the other hand, hence, the need to understand and illuminate both the management role of the principal and the wider aspects of governance.

In this context, I believe the practice of governance is much broader than management but it also includes management. In analysing the total picture of governance and management in a technical and vocational college, the management role of the principal becomes a focal point in attempting to understand actions and meanings of situations which characterise the governance system being investigated.

### 1.5 Goals and Assumptions of the Research

The major goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of managing a technical institution in Zimbabwe, in the context of the invisible influence and participation of government and industry. From this aim, several sub-goals arise:

- To establish the nature of governance in a technical and vocational college.
- To investigate the role that the principal occupies in his management practice within the scope of the governance system.
- To examine industry's involvement and participation in the governance and management of a technical institution.

- To examine the involvement of head office in governance as the responsible authority of institutions offering technical and vocational education.
- To determine the extent to which individual key players in governance and management understand their specific roles and obligations.
- To scrutinise the extent to which government legislation and policy contribute towards or affect the effectiveness of governance and management in a technical and vocational education college.
- To probe into issues of relationships amongst three key players namely head office, industry and college management.
- To recommend possible corrective interventions that could be employed in order to make the system of governance more effective.

As a researcher, my assumption (based on experience) is that the situation in technical colleges is not conducive to effectiveness; yet there could be ample scope for revitalisation. The purpose of this study is to attempt to develop an understanding of that scope, and to recommend some steps towards realizing the potential which seems to exist.

### 1.6 Significance of the Research

The contemporary on-going debate about educational governance has largely been associated with the conception of power, authority, control and accountability. Writers on governance and indeed international organisations (NEPI 1992, UNESCO 1992, World Bank 1991 and Van Vught 1993) have recognised that governance in any system is dependent on management practice within the context of the environmental system and the values which underpin the goals of the institution. Other researchers on education (Clarke 1993, Coombes 1991) have tended to agree with the notion that governance implies the manner in which power is exercised in the management of resources for development.

In Zimbabwe, my intensive literature review shows that no scientific studies have been carried out in the field of governance and management within the setting of technical and vocational colleges. Despite this, technical and vocational education is regarded as crucial (Manpower Planning and Development Act 1994) in its role of developing and producing the much needed skilled labour force for sustaining the industrial sector.

This research looks at governance as a social phenomenon that needs to be understood in cognisance of people's sensitivities, beliefs and values, hence I adopt an in-depth analysis in an attempt to let issues emerge. Sergioivanni, Burlingham, Coombs and Thurston (1999) and Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker and Riley (1986) have pointed out that a tertiary college is a complex political and social organisation whose management is influenced by the outside environment through political units such as policy makers, industry and society, hence, the issue of governance rather than mere administration.



The principal as a manager occupies a critical pivotal role in handling, transmitting and implementing social and political policy which comes from government and he/she must collaborate with industry to ensure that the curriculum being implemented addresses the demands of the labour market. As we focus on the management role of the principal, there are various theories which can be brought to bear in understanding a technical college as a social system (Sergiovanni 1991). Based on the conception of a technical college as a social system, a synthesised management approach appears to challenge the modern researcher to look at college management as both task orientated, based on the classical-scientific management approach, and people orientated, based on the human relations approach.

As a subsequent development of traditional theories of management, perceptions of the advanced theory of management, Fiedler's (1976) cognitive theory and management by objectives (MBO), seem to point out the usefulness of these theories in commerce and industry where success is easily measurable in terms of profit levels. This calls for the need to re-visit management theories and examine them in the context of educational management of an institution.

Various writers (Glatter, Taylor, Culbertson, Barrel and Ev erard as cited in Bush 1995) tend to support the view that educational institutions differ from other organisations in terms of critical objectives, dimensions and activities. This is a view I strongly support. The principal's management role in this context of a technical college tends to be distinctive. Therefore my assertion is that theories and techniques of management of a technical college should be distinctive. This calls for a careful analysis of the management practice in a tertiary institution, governance issues and

an adaptation of a multiplicity of theoretical approaches that are commensurate with the varied nature of activities and problems in a tertiary technical college.

### 1.7 Research Location

The research consists of three case studies of technical and vocational colleges under the dispensation of the Ministry of Higher Education in Zimbabwe. The three case studies are purposefully selected on the basis of ensuring a wide geographical coverage as follows:

- One polytechnic from the northern part of the country, *Harare Polytechnic*,
- One technical college from the central part of Zimbabwe, *Kwekwe Technical College*, and
- One vocational training centre from the southern part of Zimbabwe, *Westgate Vocational Training College*.

This selection is out of the total of ten polytechnics, technical colleges and vocational training centres spread throughout Zimbabwe.

Abagi (1995:13) maintains that society and its institutions do form an enormous and complex world. As such each technical college has its own uniqueness hence, the challenge for the researcher to understand and explain such issues. In this research, a detailed study of the three individual colleges is carried out using interviews, documentary analysis and observation techniques. Merriam (1988) suggests that such an approach enables triangulation which does assist in obtaining a holistic picture of the research case.

In concluding this section on the research location, perhaps an orientation map of Zimbabwe showing the location of the three case studies could assist the reader in getting a mental picture of where things are happening in this research.

Figure 1.7:                    Map of Zimbabwe Showing the Location of Three Case Studies

## 1.8 Rationale for the Selection of the Case Studies and Socio-Cultural Impetus

The three institutions purposefully chosen for the study provide a representative sample of Zimbabwean colleges in terms of their geographical location, thrust and size. These three factors encompass critical determinants of differences emerging in the governance and management of technical colleges in Zimbabwe. In this regard, pressures arising out of a cosmopolitan setting and a mining environment as pertaining to Harare Polytechnic and Kwekwe Technical College respectively, pose challenges that are unique to the environmental demands. Westgate is situated in the largest residential city of Bulawayo and is the smallest of the three. Challenges on governance and management of the three colleges could differ accordingly.

Harare Polytechnic, is the largest technical and vocational college in terms of enrolment capacity averaging seventeen thousand (17 000 ) students annually, largest staff complement and budgetary utilisation. Full-time, block release and part-time courses, adult education are offered in response to a growing demand for continuing education in this cosmopolitan setting. Industry continues to influence the content of the courses offered so that the relevance of qualifications attained are in line with changing technological advancement. Certification of these courses is offered at three levels, namely: National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND). The thrust therefore is to provide highly skilled manpower whose output is commensurate with current industrial market demands.

The geographical location of Harare Polytechnic presents its own unique challenges. Being a capital city, Harare Polytechnic is a hive of activity. Socio-cultural practices of the inhabitants of the city tend to be influenced by Western values. The English language is dominant among the elite, as it is also the official language but the majority of people use both English and Shona languages. It is a society that is now driven by monetary motives and the traditional way of life is visibly absent.

Politically, the city is a hive of activities and the campus has not escaped pressure groups and student political activism, exerting contradictions on college authorities. These require well-calculated decisions. Information moves faster and the society is well informed of current affairs.

On a comparative note, Kwekwe Technical College is a medium size college located in Kwekwe town positioned in the middle of two major cities of Zimbabwe, namely; Harare in the northern part and Bulawayo in the southern part. The heaviest concentration of iron and steel 'works' and processing industries are in Kwekwe town. People have come and settled in this midlands region of Zimbabwe in search of jobs in mines, bringing diverse social and cultural practices. The Shona speaking people migrated from Northern Zimbabwe, Ndebele speaking people from the South of Zimbabwe and people of Malawian origin who were brought during the colonial period to provide cheap labour in the mines are also found in this town.

This college was set up to cater for students in the Midlands region of Zimbabwe. Its annual enrolment figure is five hundred (500). Courses offered are full-time technical and vocational programmes

for the 'Midlands' industrial population in automotive engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer studies, commercial studies (business and secretarial courses) and part-time education development courses (further education and instructor training). These courses are certificated at the National Certificate level and the Diploma level. Therefore the thrust of the college is also dominated and influenced heavily by industry.

Westgate Vocational Training Centre is a government technical institution situated west of Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe. The college is the smallest of the three samples. It is located in an environment of the Ndebele speaking people. The socio-cultural background of the city is also diverse with the Shona people having mixed and lived together with the Ndebele people.

The thrust of the college is re-training and continuous up-grade training of the semi-skilled labour force employed as motor mechanics, panel beaters and automotive electricians. Certification of the course is at the National Craft Certificate (NCC) and National Certificate levels. The average annual enrolment figure is two hundred (200). The enrolment capacity shows that the institution is serving specified target populations like school leavers, employees seeking further training or upgrade training to improve on their skills.

The different socio-cultural backgrounds of the three colleges mentioned above attempt to portray multiple influences on the governance and management of technical institutions. Westgate poses some interesting challenges on management and governance of a smaller institution whose thrust and orientation is unique.

I use the socio-cultural background to illustrate where Zimbabwe could best be situated on the educational and industrial global map. Zimbabwe's technical and vocational education is an offshoot of the British City and Guilds system. That system traditionally has been built on an education system that was British oriented with examination and curricula accredited by Cambridge University until November 2002 when the licence is due to expire.

Hofstede's (1980:51) empirical analysis resulting in the four dimensions for differentiating "national cultures" and their bearing on management makes interesting observations on conditioning people and on reflections of common beliefs derived from education and life experiences. Given Hofstede's (1980) models, I would place Zimbabwe's managers (industrial, commercial and educational) under "low power distance" and "weak uncertainty avoidance". My assumptions are based on observations that Zimbabwe's system of education and indeed industrialisation have been influenced, assimilated and "acculturated" to the British who colonised the country and heavily developed it from 1890 to 1980. Issues of management and governance would perhaps feature in a mixture of both afrocentric-eurocentric dimensions. I maintain that principles and theories of management that are applicable to the Western world could apply perhaps with slight contingent modifications to the African world. It is on issues of leadership rather than in the mechanistic process of management that the African perspective tends to stand visibly conspicuous. Mbigi's (1997) *Ubuntu* cited in Smit and Cronje (1997:18) highlights that it is the upbringing and socialisation of individuals in African society which influences their roles in interpersonal, informational and decision-making practices.

The idea of Unhu/U buntu Shona/Zulu and Xhosa is derived from the majority of ideas reflecting the African art of living and leadership found in the “Ntu ” philosophy (Makuvaza 1996: 256). According to this leadership philosophy which is being transplanted into managerial theory in the African perspective, it is the community which defines the individual as a person and some “isolated static rationality”. An individual or a leader acquires his/her personhood or leadership in accordance with the expectations of the community or moral and behavioural expectations (*tsika* in *Shona*). In this research of three case studies the historical, attitudinal and behavioural approaches of principals of colleges, senior head office personnel and high profile industrialists will help to explain the relevance and applicability of certain critical theories that could be utilised in the revitalisation of governance and management. The three institutions out of total of ten colleges therefore do offer a varied socio-cultural setting within a Western industrial environment covering the three major parts of Zimbabwe, the north, the middle part and the southern part. This will assist the researcher in comfortably relating ideas to the broader Zimbabwean context.

The rest of this thesis is arranged as follows:

Chapter Two: In this chapter, I present an overview of the literature that I have studied and reviewed with a view to gaining some insights into issues of governance and management.

Chapter Three: This chapter provides details of the research methodology applied in the research.

Chapter Four: This chapter discusses the case Study of Westgate Vocational College.



Chapter Five: The chapter discusses the case study of Kwekwe Technical College.

Chapter Six: The chapter discusses the case study of Harare Polytechnic.

Chapter Seven: This chapter focuses on analyses of data both from the individual cases and across the cases in the form of a multi-case design.

Chapter eight: The chapter presents the interpretive conclusions and recommendations whilst highlighting the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Having looked at the introductory thoughts on this research journey, I attempt to assist the researcher by locating the entire research within a broader conceptual and theoretical framework on issues of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

Governance can be discussed from a multi-dimensional perspective. Whilst different interpretations are given to the concept, in the field of tertiary education, governance is often seen in terms of functional link structures or interactions, tensions and relationships between college management and government control systems (Baldridge *et al.* 1986, NEPI 1992, Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Van der Westhuizen 1991). In vocationally oriented colleges, the participation of industry or private sector is also considered within the link structures. In this study, the researcher views governance as the broad conception of how a technical or vocational institution is managed within the context of government's influence as the responsible authority and participation of industry as consumers of skilled manpower produced by the college. I therefore see governance of a technical or vocational college as 'management' of the institution from a 'multi-actor' perspective. Given this notion, it is essential to review the related theoretical framework on governance and management. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Borg and Gall (1989), Cohen and Manion (1994), Yin (1994) and Seidman (1998), a review of related theory will assist in developing sharper and more insightful questions on issues of college management and governance. The purpose of this chapter therefore, is primarily to put forward and discuss theories and models associated with the practice of college management and governance.

Some modern education theorists (Clark 1993, Dekker and Lemmer 1993, Bennett, Glatter and Lavicic 1994 and Bush 1995) have come to recognise that colleges of technical and vocational education are complex systems and indeed unique organisations differing in major respects from industrial organisations, business firms, government bureaucratic offices or even universities.

This chapter will further provide the understanding and insight necessary for the development of a framework into which the question of governance should fit within the debate of technical and vocational colleges. Also various writers (Taylor, Glatter, Culbertson, Barrell and Everard cited in Bush 1995) tend to support the view that educational institutions differ from other organisations in terms of critical objectives, organisational culture, dimensions and activities. The Principal's management role tends to be distinctive. Therefore my assertion is that distinctive theories and techniques on management of a technical or vocational college could perhaps serve as the criteria for making comparative judgments and explanations in this research. Further, as suggested by Yin (1994) and Seidman (1998), the theory will help me to reflect on the context of the topic, with a view to preparing myself more intelligibly for the analysis and interpretation of data, later in the research.

## 2.2 Conception of Governance in Education

Literature on governance in education (Thompson 1984, Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Baldrige *et al.* 1986, Psacharopoulos 1991, NEPI 1992) suggests that tertiary institutions are complex political and social organisations whose management is influenced by the outside environment through political units such as policy makers, industry

and society, hence the issue of governance, rather than mere administration.

In this context, governance could be viewed as a phenomenon which according to Van Vught (1993: 13):

...concerns not only the steering strategies that are used by governments to influence higher education systems, it asks attention for the behaviour of institutions, for the authority of the academic professionals and for the management processes that go on within these institutions.

Given this analysis of governance in education, it may be inferred that it is generally about power, control of educational establishments and participation of all legitimate interest groups in the process of management of educational establishments.

Governance in technical and vocational education can be viewed distinctively, based on the premise that technical and vocational education is defined as systematic instruction with a view to developing practical abilities needed for proficiency in a specific vocation. Literature and indeed observations have shown that in the case of technical institutions or vocationally oriented institutions in the sub-Saharan Africa, it is not only government which exerts its powerful influence on institutional management but industry as well. Clark (1983) and El -Khawas (1991) cited in Van Vught (1993: 32 ) have referred to the mechanisms in which organisations outside the college form powerful forces that influence the management of the college, as "buffer organisations". These could be regarded in a way as collective extensions of institutional management. In Zimbabwe, it seems clear that the two major 'buffer organisations' operating within technical and vocational education colleges are industry and government.

Whilst it is recognised that graduates from technical or vocationally oriented colleges are invariably absorbed by industry for employment, some theorists (King 1986, Verma 1990, Middleton, Ziderman and Van Adams 1993) have referred to the need and for such institutions to involve industry as much as possible in curriculum development and periodic review of curriculum contents.

The fundamental notion behind this is that by bringing industry to colleges through advisory boards or committees and getting them to participate in curriculum review issues, the courses will be more relevant to industrial needs and to prevailing levels of industrial technology. It can however be argued that the extent to which such industrial boards can influence programmes in a vocational or technical college, depends to a large extent on the responsiveness of the management system at the college or perhaps the nature of the relationship between the college and the industrialists.

Given this scenario, I may argue that where such organisations exist, they are perhaps likely to take advantage of this relationship and perhaps serve more directly their own interests rather than operate as neutral advisory boards concerned with the college's mission of producing a product whose skills are commensurate with industry's employable skills levels. Further, literature does not show how this relationship is operating in the context of a technical and vocational college in Africa.

Studies done for the World Bank (1991) by have shown that during the past ten years, virtually all developing countries have assumed an active role in developing skilled workers through vocationally oriented colleges.

Although an active government role may be appropriate or desirable, literature on technical and vocational education does show that the balance of activities by government could range from direct control or providing training itself, to providing supportive services or providing finance for training. Whilst it can be argued that supportive services are relevant at all stages of skills development, studies by Mbizvo (1984), Thompson (1984) and King (1986) have shown that in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana and Zimbabwe, government may also play a regulatory function through services that enhance the quality of training such as testing and certification, research and curriculum development.

In some cases, governments in some of these countries may provide enterprise training by providing training assistance know-how and advisory services to colleges rather than control the colleges. Amongst the varied range of supportive services that governments may offer Castley and Alftan cited in Middleton *et al.* (1993) have referred to some governments offering measures geared to create a climate of opinion and dialogue between the colleges and industry, conducive to effective relevant training, or encouraging tripartite collaboration among employees, employers and government institutions.

Perhaps the main thrust of government intervention in technical colleges should be to provide supportive services such as financing and improving the quality of teaching and learning through various strategies, rather than exerting control structures that may stifle college management's initiative or interfere with the character development of colleges. NEPI (1992) supports the notion that power

relations could be critical in determining the character of an educational system.

In situations where educational governance is highly politicised, Baldrige *et al.* (1986) warn that lines of accountability at the college level could be fragmented or even lost, thus affecting the effective management of the institution. In most politicised educational establishments structural relationships would seem to be ambiguous or contradictory and this may result in principal stress or organisational stress or even environmental stress. Sergiovanni (1991) has also alluded to the notion of principal stress and poor management arising from heavy political decisions from outside the school or college.

Given this relationship between the college and government and between the college and industry and given the manner in which power can be exercised by these outside forces in influencing the culture and management system of a college, the conception of governance in education should, in the context of this research, be examined. This examination should perhaps focus on finding out if the governance practice is creating and sustaining an environment which fosters effective management at the institutional level. Is the system making provision for proper accountability, efficiency in resources management, reliable information flow and transparency? An analysis of some models of college governance may provide some guidelines before attempting to answer some of the above-mentioned questions.

### 2.3 Models of College Governance

In trying to meet the educational obligations of individuals and at the same time address industrial training needs, various models of governance come to bear in colleges involved in technical and vocational education and training.

Some of these models could be used to explain the scenario of governance in technical and vocational colleges. According to some theorists on governance (Moss 1984, Tricker 1984, Baldridge *et al.* 1986, Psacharopoulos 1991, Bargh, Scott and Smith 1995, Harris, Bannett and Preedy 1997) the three models that have received widespread attention in respect of their application to tertiary colleges are: Bureaucratic, Collegial and Political.

Before examining these models in detail within the context of technical and vocational colleges, it may be sound and perhaps useful to discuss goals of technical and vocational colleges. Therefore, in moving beyond this point, major goals of technical and vocational colleges will be analysed and the relationship between these colleges and the private industrial sector will further be analysed briefly. Technical and vocational colleges are complex organisations which like other organisations do have goals, structures and hierarchical systems in order to carry out policy decisions, specified duties, decision-making processes and routine bureaucratic tasks.

These activities are aimed at creating an environment suitable for teaching and learning practical skills, scientific knowledge, and technological and social change with a view to producing a properly



qualified skilled worker needed to sustain the economy of a country . Some authorities on technical and vocational education (King 1986, Verma 1990, Middleton *et al.* 1993) tend to agree with the notion that technical and vocational education is that part of education intended to prepare one to enter into some income generating employment and keep abreast of changes in that speciality.

This requires a complex educational process of developing competencies needed to enter or advance further in an occupation. Given this general outline of the role of technical and vocational education, it might be useful to further compare the historical origins of technical and vocational education of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Perhaps this may assist in bringing out the basis of the role of the private industrial sector in influencing the production of skilled manpower and the role of technical colleges in the provision of skilled manpower for the labour markets.

Williamson (1992) referred to by the *Journal for Technical and Vocational Education of South Africa* (September 1993) has indicated that in South Africa, the very first classes offering vocational subjects took place in Durban in 1884 under the auspices of the railway administration for their workers. Thereafter, it was the mining industry which initiated the first classes for technical and vocational education in Kimberley, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Potchefstroom as well as the East and West Rand in 1902. In Cape Town, the Chamber of Commerce organised the first evening classes in commercial subjects in 1905. According to Hartmann (1990) cited in Horne (1993) the year 1906 saw the establishment of the Pretoria Polytechnic offering full-time classes. In 1907 the Durban Technical Institute also opened its doors. Both were established by private industrial sectors.

Along this pattern, technical and vocational colleges were established through private sector initiative until 1923, when the Higher Education Act of South Africa provided the Minister of Education with the authority to recognise, administer and subsidise technical and vocational institutions. Historically therefore it can be inferred that South Africa's technical colleges, some of which have now grown into technikons, have their roots in the private sector.

In the case of Zimbabwe, in 1919, an industrialist, the late George Chaloner who owned the largest engineering establishment then, Hubert Davis Company, started mechanical engineering classes for a few people willing to join his company. As more young men wished to join his classes, he prevailed upon government for assistance and in 1926 the first Salisbury Technical School was opened. Later in 1936 Chaloner and Sir Ernest Guest appealed to the government for a permanent site to establish the Salisbury Polytechnic which later changed to Harare Polytechnic in 1980. The complex was completed in January 1964, opening with an enrolment of 500 students. The Polytechnic sought to play a critical role in the national economy by developing a skills base for the needs of commerce and industry through the provision of various engineering courses and business education.

It does appear that in both cases namely, South Africa and Zimbabwe, technical and vocational education has its origins in industry. With the passage of time, the system of technical and vocational education must continue to respond to the ever-changing needs of commerce and industry. One sure way of doing this, according to Edwards and Carroll (1984), is to continue to improve the relationships between colleges and the private industrial sector.

King (1986) supports this notion and maintains that this can be achieved through a high degree of regular communication, organised interaction and co-operation with private industrial sector. The current fears are that perhaps as colleges are expanding with increased enrolments and growth of the system, a widening gulf might be developing.

Given this brief historical analysis, it becomes clearer that the goal of technical and vocational education has been, and continues to be geared towards providing the industrial labour market with people who have specific skills, technological and practical knowledge as well as the necessary affective and personal traits required for fulfilling a role in the community. The involvement of commerce and industry is therefore explained by the college's obligation to and interest in linking technical and vocational education with the skills needs of the private industrial sector, hence, a major characteristic of technical and vocational education. Nonetheless, this notion may tend to raise the question of control, power and influence in the management of colleges. Should the private industrial sector assume a greater and more meaningful role in the shaping of curriculum for technical and/or vocational colleges? How should government ensure that the management of colleges is directing the system effectively so that people are trained for the jobs of the future industry or would that open the way for interfering and control in matters of college management? In trying to analyse these issues, it is essential to look at the three models of governance that have been widely recognised in tertiary institutions of this nature, namely bureaucratic, collegial and political.

The bureaucratic model of governance borrows its major features from Max Weber's (1947) notion of a bureaucracy. Essentially,

bureaucracies are networks of social groups dedicated to limited goals and organised for maximum efficiency. Studies on Weber's work show that regulation of a bureaucratic system is based on the principle of 'Legal rationality' as contrasted with informal regulation based on friendship, loyalty to family or personal allegiance to a charismatic leader.

Some writers on educational organisations (Mintzberg 1983, Hoy and Miskel 1991, Fidler 1997,) have summarised up the following major characteristics of an ideal bureaucracy:

- division of labour and specialisation of expertise,
- salaries as a rational form of payment and competency as the basis of promotion,
- hierarchy of authority for control and decision-making including formal chains of command and communication,
- rules and regulations on the conduct of work,
- impersonal orientation, i.e. treating people equally on the basis of facts not feelings.

Arguments have been put forward by Bush (1995) and Mintzberg (1983) that although most institutions of teaching and learning would show some evidence of these characteristics found in a bureaucratic system, studies have indicated that 'informal organisations' do exist in colleges where individuals reciprocate

favours not sanctioned by formal rules. Much as Weber claimed that bureaucratic structures could operate with a high degree of efficiency, some authors on educational governance (Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Baldrige *et al.* 1986, Benjamin and Carroll 1996) have argued that the effectiveness of educational bureaucracies may be dependent to a large extent on stable external conditions in which to operate.

If this notion is translated into technical and vocational institutions, the stable external conditions might perhaps refer to the relationships between the college management and the private industry working with that college.

It might further mean the existence of a sound relationship between college management and head office as the responsible authority, in the case of government institutions in Zimbabwe. If one were to further examine areas of commonality between Weber's bureaucracy and the technical or vocational college, one would see some issues emerging that have been adapted to the educational institution through planned change or perhaps evolutionary change.

The formation of the division of labour and the hierarchical structure in a college setting provides for various departments such as mechanical engineering, computer science, business studies, clothing and textile technology, whilst levels of control are systematically structured in a hierarchical order, from the principal to the vice-principal to heads of departments, lecturers, instructors and to students. Within this bureaucratic model, Hanson (1985) highlights 'technical efficiency' due to expert control because of the model's emphasis on efficiency. However, some writers (Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Van Wyk 1992, Bargh *et al.* 1996) have warned that this

efficiency may tend to routinise the process of organisation and control, to the extent that incoming questions and issues could be treated rather in a programmed and systematic way that will draw upon a minimum of human and material resources.

In a college setting, there are always unique issues peculiar to technical institutions, such as enrolments to departments based on a genuine interest combined with the relevant technical aptitude, academic freedom among staff and students and control and management of limited funds, unforeseen damages to equipment in the course of training or wear and tear coupled with the relatively heavy use of consumable materials during practical demonstrations and training (Steyn 1993). Issues regarding behaviour of students can be contentious, according to Van der Westhuizen (1991) where too many rules are defined, and when the college on the other hand demands creativity, critical thinking and some degree of flexibility in adjusting to the external environment.

Hanson (1985) further warns that in a typical college setting if the director in head office or the principal is pre-occupied with analysing the discrepancy between the ideal type of a bureaucracy and the concrete realities of the system, it can be self-defeating to the point of almost 'enslaving the workers'. This notion supports Henri Fayol's theory (1841 - 1925) cited in Hanson (1985: 22) that the head or manager should apply his efforts in the following 'precepts' rather than act bureaucratically:

- Have a thorough knowledge of his personnel.
- Eliminate incompetence.
- Set a good example.

- Do not become engrossed in detail.
- Conduct periodic meetings at which direction and focusing of efforts are discussed.
- Conduct periodic audits of the organisation.

From this discussion on the bureaucratic theory it can be observed that even if human beings are assumed to act rationally, efficiency, if measured in terms of productivity could to some extent reduce colleges into factories. On the other hand one positive element emerging from this model is that issues of accountability are addressed since bureaucratic structures contain the essential ingredients of success in terms of who does what, who has responsibility for what and who reports to who. This is made possible through a clearly defined unit of command and a job description. The major weakness though that appears to emerge in this model and noted by others (Davies and Morgan 1983, Hoy and Miskel 1991, Arikewuyo 1998,) is that little is heard about the dynamics of informal types of power and influence amongst staff and even students. Yet, in colleges for example, student groups in the form of students' representative councils can appeal to the emotions of people with the result that a lot can take place through mass mobilisation of students by these leadership groups.

Writers on educational management (Van Wyk 1992, Hanson 1995, Bargh *et al.* 1996) agree that the bureaucratic model shares with scientific management the assumption of rationality and economic conceptions of human beings. In this regard Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999:52) warn that:

Neither scientific management nor bureaucratic thinking gives attention to the human side of life

in educational organisations. Such issues, for example, as individual personality and human needs, motivation and morale seem clearly secondary.

This warning is supported by Senge (1990) who points out that learning organisations should not underplay the emotions of people, their personal values and beliefs bearing in mind that these students and staff are drawn from backgrounds of varied value orientations. This scenario further points to a major problem in applying the bureaucratic model to learning organisations.

Governance in technical and vocational colleges can further be analysed within the context of the collegial model. Some theorists (Baldrige *et al.* 1986, Bargh *et al.* 1996) regard this model as an institution in which major decisions are reached through all kinds of consultations and deliberations. In this case, the major role of the principal is consensus building. This approach tends to shift decision-making from the hierarchical process found in the bureaucracy. Instead, there should be some kind of full participation of the academic community so that they can administer their own affairs including the administration of the college.

Various writers on modern systems of governance in institutions of higher learning (Bush 1995, Charlton, Geat and Scammells 1995, Bargh *et al.* 1996, Fidler 1997) tend to support the conception of a college as a collegial organisation. They argue that professionals should be given the facility for making decisions in the interest of the college and within a formal setting. They maintain that this way, anxieties, misconceptions and problems of impersonality are minimised to a large extent. However, the simplicity of this model could perhaps be glossing over some realities. Hoy and Miskel



(1991) have expressed fears that the collegial model may fail to deal adequately with the problem of conflict. There could be conflicts even before a consensus is reached.

Studies cited in Bargh, Scott and Smith (1995) have shown that in the United Kingdom, collegiality tends to survive in institutions that have a self-governing body dominated by the top academics of the college and thus having authority on financial management. From this perspective, government technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe could find it rather difficult to employ this model simply because the funding system is determined and provided by central government (Mbizvo 1994), even if the funds may have originated from industry through a tax-levy system. The whole question of inter-organisation linkage as observed by Van de Ven (1976) where two or more organisations come together to transact resources in pursuit of common goals, tend to make these Zimbabwean colleges heavily linked to the head office, as the parent authority. They may tend to link perhaps because they want head office to solve problems that colleges think could be too complex.

A clear examination of case studies of technical and vocational colleges in this research will perhaps shed some light on this relationship and into the collegial model. In essence, it is argued that leaders of the collegial model will need professional expertise to ensure that they are held in high esteem by their colleagues (Baldrige *et al.* 1986). Given this scenario, the principal's role is therefore more modest and if he/she has to succeed, he/she must develop interpersonal dynamics since negotiations and compromise are the key elements.

The third model of governance that is considered generally prevalent in educational institutions (Bush 1995, Hoy and Miskel 1991) relates to a situation where government strongly determines and influences the broad character of the college, hence the term, political model. According to Baldrige *et al.* (1986) the political model has developed from the premises that decision-making in the administration of a college is not an isolated technique but another critical process that must be integrated into the larger political arena. Studies on this model appear to show an emphasis on political decisions with the result that colleges could be pressurised in many directions, thus forcing changes throughout the system.

The principal is thus reduced to the role of a mediator between power blocks. According to studies cited in NEPI (1992) of South Africa, it is the network of key administrators within head office or people with political influence at the college level who may tend to make most of the critical decisions, in the political model within the South African context.

The conception of colleges being pressurised into forced change by outside political forces has received criticism from various writers (Davies and Morgan 1983, Farrington 1995, Benjamin and Carroll 1996). In the United Kingdom, Becher and Kogan (1992) cited in Bush (1995: 74) have argued that

...political models in colleges tend to focus on group activity rather than the institution as a whole.

In this case, interaction between groups or departments is at the heart of political models where the concern is with interests and

interest groups. Perhaps this could mean then that permanent interest groups such as departments which tend to be cohesive due to shared values and beliefs could form alliances against other departments in order to press for policy changes. However, these policy changes may sharply contrast with the aims of other units, hence creating conflict in the organisation. Given this trend, one may assume that goals of educational organisations tend to be unstable or perhaps ambiguous and contested to the extent that individuals, or interest groups or coalitions can act towards achieving their own purposes.

According to Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999) political models may also emphasise the significance of external influences on internal decision-making. In this case, there could be political inputs from outside bodies and individuals mediated by internal participants since colleges are open rather than closed systems and viewed as integral parts of a larger environment, not as bounded entities isolated from their environment (Bush 1989, Psacharopoulos 1991, Middleton *et al.* 1993).

In this model, control becomes problematic; therefore some principals at the college level or directors in head offices may adopt political strategies to exert their power and control. Hoyle (1986) cited in Bush (1995: 82) outlines some of these strategies:

Divide and rule tactics geared to arrange separate deals with certain departments for example in respect of resource allocation.

Controlling information, since information is an important source of power and principals are the recipients of external information and may use this to influence decisions.

Co-optation by involving those who support the leader or whose potential opposition has to be diverted, thus using the strategy to involve a certain person in the decision-making process or manipulating the outcome.

In this discussion on the political model, it has been noted by some writers (Baldrige *et al.* 1986, Bargh *et al.* 1996, Orsini, Courcelle and Brinkerhoff 1996) that colleges following this model of governance derive their influence for decisions largely from the external environment, from the dynamics of departmental power, from political influence and political brokerage. Essentially literature appears to show that political models differ from the bureaucratic and collegial approaches in that they tend to focus mainly on the goals of sub-units or individuals or even looser groups of individuals rather than the objectives of the institution itself.

An analysis of models of governance has shown that educational governance in colleges tends to be influenced by various interest groups within the colleges and outside the colleges. This scenario advances the notion that these colleges do have multiple goals reflecting various interest groups and in the process of managing a college, the goals of the various groups may conflict with those of other groups.

The need to further examine colleges as organisations becomes essential in this study. Goals in colleges are contested as they serve clients instead of seeking to make profit and professionals tend to dominate the decision-making process, hence, expertise becomes more critical in managing these complex organisations.

From this broad overview and analysis of the college situation, I am inclined to think that the principal's job in a bureaucratic model is perhaps not so simple, even if he/she has legitimate power to assess problems, propose alternatives and make rational choices. The structures in the bureaucracy tend to create great expectations since the principal, as head, stands at the top of a complex pyramid of power. On the other hand, in the political model, as I have noted earlier in this study, that power is diffused and fragmented into interest groups or certain individuals with political influence or perhaps into departments, therefore high expectations about management performance cannot be met easily. Perhaps the use of shared collegial decisions, consensus and community participation might be useful as observed in the collegial model. But again the outside community consisting of industrialists and government's head office, as is the case in Zimbabwe, might create a difficult system of management and governance since these other outside parties could have their own interests which might even be quite diverse.

Bureaucratic models tend to look at organisational structures as hierarchical, with decision-making as a top-down process whereas the collegial model shows organisational structures as lateral, with members having the right to participate in decision-making. On the other hand political models do present organisational structures as unstable and highlight conflicting elements in college governance. Given this scenario, there is a need to look at colleges as organisations because we have observed that these colleges provide mechanisms for co-ordinating the work of individuals in order to accomplish their missions.

## 2.4 Technical and Vocational Colleges as Organisations

It seems that ways of controlling and co-ordinating activities of different individuals dealing with varied events are only possible if there is some form of organisation whose functions can easily be represented through an organisational structure. Based on this notion, it follows that schools and colleges are organisations and this is supported by various authors (Van de Ven 1976, Hanson 1985, Bush 1989, Fidler 1997). Whereas in the past, organisations have long been described as either “open systems” or “closed systems” (Drucker 1977, Mintzberg 1989), there appears to be a new paradigm shift in defining organisations. The new shift advances the view that organisations cannot be closed or open in an absolute sense (Hanson 1985, Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Van der Westhuizen 1991, Van Wyk 1992 and Fidler 1997). Arguments have been advanced suggesting that schools and colleges, as organisations can in fact maintain degrees of “openness” and “closedness” with respect to specific decisions or pressures facing the institution. For example, a college may be open to advice from industrialists on matters of curriculum or a school might find itself open to advice from parents yet quite closed to advice on issues of discipline.

Given this analysis, organisations can now be classified and described on the basis of their significant differences. Modern theorists (Hanson 1985, Hoy and Miskel 1991 and Fidler 1997) have suggested two types of organisations, namely “domesticated” organisation and “wild” organisation. These two opposing classes of organisations must maintain opposing relations with their environments. Hanson (1985) describes a college as a domesticated organisation. He maintains this notion on the premise that a public

college has guaranteed inputs which continue from year to year and are not necessarily dependent on the quality or volume of the college's output. If this were to be described further, it would mean that if the college were ineffective, it would continue to receive perhaps the same financial support as it would if it were highly active and effective. On the other hand, business organisations could be classified as wild organisations which must struggle for survival, their existence is not guaranteed, they select their clients and they compete with one another for resources and markets.

Given that technical and vocational colleges could be classified as domesticated organisations, effectiveness for them would mean doing 'the right things' (Drucker 1977) and efficiency would imply 'doing things right'. I would like to believe therefore that the biggest challenge in governance of technical or vocational colleges could perhaps be centred on creating a culture of effectiveness or as Hoy and Miskel (1991) have suggested, achieving outcomes which are consistent with expectations or objectives.

Such a challenge would demand putting into place appropriate means and mechanisms of deciding what and how things should be done and means of allocating accountability to ensure that the right things are done, so that the quality of outcomes matches expectations. Nonetheless, in attempting to be effective, Glatter (1986) warns that a college might run into the problem of tensions between organisational maintenance and organisational development. Some theorists (Nadler and Tushman 1980, Oakland 1989, Walsh 1991) have suggested that as an answer to this tension, colleges may consider employing total quality management within the entire system of management and governance. The question then to ask is what is "total quality management" and should it

really be applied to technical education or to the business world? Earlier in this chapter, the role of technical and vocational colleges was highlighted as that of educating, training and developing highly skilled manpower for commerce and industry.

I maintain therefore that the world of commerce and industry should be concerned with receiving well-rounded and highly skilled graduates hence the need for some kind of total quality management in the system of governance.

Quality, according to Ashworth and Harvey (1994) can be both subjective and relative. The term quality as defined in this context of total quality management does not emerge from the traditional notion of providing a product or a service that is distinctive and special but providing a service or product that conforms to agreed specifications or according to Walsh (1991), set standards and objectives. This view appears to draw a similar conception from the practice of quality control as applicable to the manufacturing sector which emphasizes the concept of fitness for the purpose (Murgatroyd and Morgan 1994).

The concern for quality is supported by Kearns (1988:32), a former chief executive officer at Xerox in United States of America:

Lest you think I'm interested in quality vocational education, let me assure you that nothing could be further from the truth. We need employees who are highly skilled, broadly and deeply educated; men and women who are ...liberally educated (p.32).



Within the context of education, total quality management has broadly been defined by various theorists (Deming 1986, Oakland 1989, Taylor and Hill 1997, Walsh 1991) as the process of adapting the organisation to the ever-changing environment with a view to improving the quality of graduates or educational products through the system of focusing at the needs of the industry or consumers of training. It is essentially, therefore, customer-focused organisational improvement, achieved through the activities of all key players in problem-solving and decision-making.

In this context of organisational improvement in a college setting, Nadler and Tushman (1980) have suggested criteria which could be utilised for evaluating college performance, namely:

- Goal attainment, how well the college is achieving its strategic objectives;
- Resource utilisation, how well the college makes use of its available resources;
- Adaptability, the capacity of the college to review its performance and match the changing requirements of its internal and external environment (pp. 9 - 14).

Although college establishments could be viewed and classified as “domesticated” organisations, as discussed earlier in this study, they tend to operate as open systems. They possess most of the attributes originally identified as characteristic of such systems. Based on this notion, a simplistic open system model that could be applied to technical and vocational education could be illustrated as

below, as supported by some theorists ( Nadler and Tushman 1980, Oakland 1989, Walsh 1991).

This model demonstrates the extent to which the customer is involved in the process and highlights how crucial his or her satisfaction with the output is in technical and vocational education. I further maintain that the two elements are inseparable to a greater degree than in the manufacturing sector. Total quality management in technical and vocational education would seem to apply to quality throughout the entire process of transformation.

Oakland (1989) illustrates the notion of transforming the entire process with the delivery of service in a restaurant where the customer is not just concerned with the food but with how it is served, presentation style, delivery speed and courtesy of staff. In technical and vocational education, total quality management would therefore imply improving the effectiveness and flexibility of the entire system, in terms of improving every department, every activity at every critical level and every person since every activity and every person affect the other. This would perhaps mean alignment of the college with its environment, mobilising core skills of professionals and getting them involved in decision-making and ensuring management accountability.

Perhaps in a complex college setting, I would maintain that organisational effectiveness through total quality management can only be possible if, firstly, the mission and the objectives are clarified to all so that there is a shared vision and a common purpose; and secondly, there is some room for constant strong feedback so that there is some resultant action. If total quality management is to be adapted and utilised as a tool for improving the effectiveness of a college, there could be a need to re-examine the internal administrative or organisational structures and management's attitude towards the external environment, if the entire process is to

be improved. In this complex system of a college customer satisfaction and customer related activities tend to be equated with the external environment. In the case of Zimbabwe, this could mean the quality of relationships between the college and head office as the accreditation body or between the college and employers and the society at large.

However, it needs to be stated that total quality management on its own, will not improve the effectiveness of a technical or vocational college, as an organisation. The question of accountability remains a central issue in revitalising colleges of technical and vocational education.

### 2.5 Accountability in College Governance

Accountability in the governance of an educational institution could be described as the act of being answerable for one's actions as an individual, team or in the case of this research, as the principal of a college or the Permanent Secretary in head office. My perception of the process is that it involves submitting an account against a background of standards or outcomes as expected by the system or institution.

Harris *et al.* (1997) have pointed out that the act involves taking the consequences in either credit or blame. This may imply that when someone accepts to take an assignment he or she should be held accountable for the actions taken. This view is supported by various theorists (Kiggundu 1986, Farrington 1995, Davies and Ellison 1997, Vecchio 1997). Engaging employers as stakeholders in the college councils or curriculum committees and engaging head office as the responsible authority in the governing of technical or vocational

colleges, makes them all answerable for their actions and for the outcomes of the education and training process. As Harris *et al.* (1997:14) argue, industrialists as consumers of technical education are the system's "taste buds".

Various contemporary theorists on educational leadership and management (Bottery 1992, Ashworth and Harvey 1994, Davies and Ellison 1997, Vecchio 1997) have pointed out that in evaluating the effectiveness of an educational system, accountability should be the central theme. This notion tends to suggest that those involved in the management and governance of tertiary institutions should be made accountable for a range of outcomes.

In this discussion on accountability, the questions that quickly come to mind are: accountable to whom? Accountable for what? What are the mechanisms for accountability – how do they work? Because of fears associated with accountability in tertiary education where perhaps at times the principal could be buried under paperwork or battling with resource utilisation or reacting to external environmental pressures, Holmes (1993: 111) advances the theory of "offensive accountability and defensive accountability". In his theory, defensive accountability means "having efficient and effective procedures in place for dealing with all those demands for information and reports on effectiveness which the school will face as a matter of routine" (*ibid*). These could be statements of policy, financial data, statistical information, or procedures for reporting to head office and to industry. On the other hand, offensive accountability would imply the territory where you choose to demonstrate success, worth and achievement.

An effective principal would exert his or her energy towards the offensive side of the equation. Given this scenario, Harris *et al.* (1997) warn that anyone with a stake in the effectiveness of a college should watch out for a principal who is confident, proactive and highly engaged in the real business of the college, thus distinguishing between defensive and offensive accountability at the level of school management.

In the broad areas of college governance, Bottery (1992: 120) distinguishes among four modes of accountability within what he calls the “democratic model of accountability” as follows:

- Moral accountability - to students parents and clients;
- Professional accountability - responsibility to oneself and colleagues;
- Contractual accountability - to employers and head office;
- Intellectual accountability - to discipline imposed by the intellectual criteria.

These four concepts view key parties in the educational arena as accountable to each other (on a horizontal dimension). This notion appears to oppose the traditional bureaucratic model of accountability in which students are accountable to the teacher or lecturer and the principal accountable to the college management board or in the case of Zimbabwe, to head office’s permanent secretary, fixating as it does on hierarchy roles and predictability.

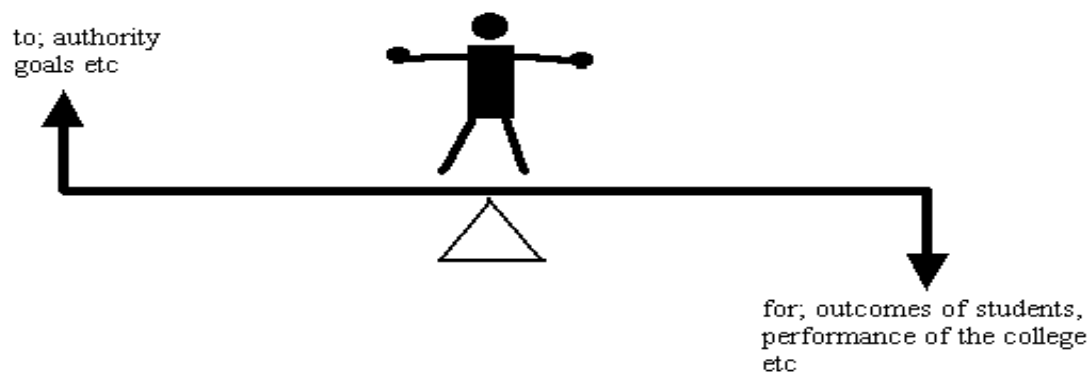
Given this analysis, it would appear that the bureaucratic model of accountability would augur well in a n environment in which the system of governance is perhaps more interested in control than in accountability *per se*. Morgan (1986) cited in Bottery (1992: 121) tends to support the democratic model of accountability on the view that it appears to encourage “substantial rationality” where people are not just conforming to directives but also evaluating the appropriateness of their actions.

Various arguments have been advanced in support of the four modes of accountability within the democratic model of accountability (Toffler 1980, West-Burnham 1992, Farrington 1995). For example, in technical and vocational education, I would maintain that perhaps this model would be appropriate in terms of encouraging initiative since it creates a reflective approach in its substantial rationality. In Zimbabwe, I suppose some principals could simply say yes to everything that they are asked by someone from above the system with political power such as a minister or with authority such as the permanent secretary, for example, in admitting a candidate who does not qualify for the course. In such situations, Murgatroyd and Morgan (1994) have warned that saying no is desirable in accountability for the sake of effectiveness rather than mere conformity imposed by the bureaucratic hierarchy in which those who question the wisdom of the conventional practices are seen as trouble makers. In this context of accountability, deviance from doing the right thing and doing things right could be seen as an offence of contractual accountability, moral accountability and professional accountability.

In good governance of a college therefore, the principal of a technical college, in responding to the demands from the outside pressures,

should as much as possible consider his or her accountability which legitimately stems from his role and from his or her expert power. This notion is supported by West-Burnham (1992:180) who advances the argument that in managing accountability, the principal cannot run away from the conception of “organisational homeostasis”, which states that the principal should be able to balance the different states of accountability whilst being responsive to and responsible for the dynamics of the force fields that constitute the organisational environment. This principle could be illustrated as below:

Figure II  
ORGANISATIONAL HOMEOSTASIS  
accountable



Adapted from West-Burnham (1992)

In the context of this discussion, this implies that the Principal as head of a college has to balance his or her responsiveness by being accountable to the responsible authority (head office), goals of the college and norms and values of the college whilst being accountable



for the outcomes, tasks, and behaviour of students and overall impression of his college.

This analysis suggests that perhaps at this point, there could be a need to further examine the demands imposed on the role of principalship within the context of leadership and management responsibilities. This could help the researcher to better understand leadership and management within the conceptual framework of governance of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe.

## 2.6 Comparing Management and Leadership in Educational Governance

The distinction between management and leadership has attracted considerable attention amongst various theorists (Van de Ven 1976, Bennis and Nanus 1985, Hoy and Miskel 1991, Van der Westhuizen 1991, Becher and Kogan 1992, Bottery 1992, Holmes 1993, Davies and Ellison 1997) in the broad area of educational governance. A clear distinction is provided by Bennis and Nanus (1985: 21) who point out that to “manage” is simply “to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct” whereas leading could mean “influencing, guiding in direction, course action or opinion”. The difference could be summarised as “activities of vision and judgment (effectiveness) versus activities of mastering routines (efficiency)” (*ibid*).

Management as a practice was conceptualised in 1916 by Henri Fayol (a French industrialist) as essentially planning, organising, coordinating and controlling. With the transplantation of this conception to education, Van der Westhuizen (1991: 49) argues that

keeping a college running smoothly and effectively requires the combination of both management and leadership abilities in key complex activities of:

- Curriculum and teaching affairs.
- Staff affairs.
- Physical facilities.
- School-community relations.
- Financial affairs.
- Information affairs.
- Pupil/student affairs.

Further arguments by the same author suggest that the management tasks of planning, organising, leading and controlling are not non-related tasks but rather interwoven, inseparably bound to each other and dependent upon each other. In the area of education, this practice of management, according to Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999), takes place at three levels : classroom management at the lowest level and handled by the teacher, school management at the higher level and handled by the principal and system management at the highest level involving the governors of the school and in the case of Zimbabwean colleges, the permanent secretary for the education ministry as the ultimate authority.

Fowler and Graves (1995) maintain that for good management to take place, the manager must be both task and people-oriented: he/she must clearly describe the tasks whilst ensuring that members of staff are motivated. To maintain this balance appears to be a difficult exercise. Hence the notion by some writers (Drucker

1977, Davies and Morgan 1983, Bush 1995) that three key tools that are useful in management practices are: decision-making skills, information skills and interpersonal skills.

Regarding decision-making, Fowler and Graves (1995) have come up with a 'competence model' for decision-making. This requires the manager to behave positively and decisively in gathering information, evaluating implications, looking at options and acting on the decision quickly. But, this could mean taking risks. In this situation of decision-making, Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999) warn that it is not sufficient for the head of a school or manager to be equipped with the knowledge, understanding and judgment but he/she must have the appropriate authority.

In this context, various writers (Stewart 1991, Van Wyk 1992, Fowler and Graves 1995) suggest three sources of authority for the manager as follows: structural authority stemming from his position or rank, expert authority stemming from his knowledge or expertise and personal authority stemming from personal respect. Given this scenario, it would appear therefore that people at the core of management of colleges must do a lot in order to earn these kinds of authorities.

By virtue of his position as head, the manager of a technical or vocational college must communicate with the outside world, staff, students, parents, head office and industrialists. He/she therefore needs to be highly skilled and competent in managing information and communicating that information effectively. Vecchio (1997: 45) describes the manager as the "nerve centre of the organizational unit" hence the need for special skills in information gathering, information monitoring, scanning the environment and

dissemination of information. The manager is, in any case, the spokesman and the negotiator for the organisation.

According to Drucker (1997) the manager's involvement in interpersonal relationships emerges from his/her figurehead role, leadership role and liaison role. In this regard, the head of a college as the figurehead, must perform some ceremonial duties at some point, such as addressing staff and students, chairing meetings, taking special guests around the college, hence the need for interpersonal skills.

Mintzberg (1983) has pointed out that the manager is responsible for the work of all staff in the organisation. In this regard, some of the manager's actions could constitute a leader's role and in some cases, a liaison role. I tend to agree therefore that interpersonal skills are crucial in the management of an institution.

Even if the manager could have those three authorities defined in the foregoing discussion and even if he/she could have the decision-making skills, informational skills and interpersonal skills, Vecchio (1997) warns that if the manager is not fully aware of the insight of his/her own work, he/she may fail to be effective. This notion suggests that the manager's effectiveness is dependent largely on how well he/she understands his/her job or role, since this will influence his responsiveness to the challenges, pressures and dilemmas of the job.

In respect of leadership, various definitions have been advanced and cited in Hoy and Miskel (1991: 373) to describe the broad concept of leadership as follows:

Leadership is the initiation of new structures or procedures for accomplishing an organization's goals and objectives or for changing an organization's goals and objectives.

James Lippman  
(1964)

The essence of organizational leadership is the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organisation.

Robert Kahn (1978)

Leadership takes place in groups of two or more people and most frequently involves influencing group member behaviour as it relates to the pursuit of group goals.

Robert House and Mary  
Baetz (1979)

Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader and shared by the leader and his followers.

John Gardner  
(1990)

From these definitions, the key words and phrases are: initiation, influence, persuasion, induces, example and influencing people *vis-à-vis* pursuit of goals. It can therefore be observed that the concept of leadership involves a social influence process aimed at structuring activities or relationships in a particular way. Based on this analysis, I may believe that, whereas management is about stability and efficiency, leadership seeks to stress change and getting people to agree about what needs to be accomplished. Hoy and Miskel (1991: 374) suggest that "managers plan, budget, organise, staff, control and solve problems whereas leaders establish direction, align people, motivate and inspire them". Whilst no one appears to suggest

that managers and leaders are equivalent, it seems that in both roles, there could be some overlap.

The definition of leadership could be rather elusive since it appears to be dependent on the position, behaviour and personal characteristics of the person occupying the leadership position. In this debate, Caldwell and Spinks (1992: 92) have advanced the notion that in educational governance, what is needed is not just leadership but strategic leadership.

His views are supported by Davies and Ellison (1997: 147) who suggest that strategic leadership in the context of a college involves:

- keeping abreast of trends and issues, threats and opportunities in the college environment and in society at large, nationally and internationally.
- sharing knowledge and information with others in the college's community.
- establishing structures and processes which enable the college to set priorities and formulate strategies for preferred future.
- monitoring the implementation of strategies in the wider environment, facilitating an ongoing process of review.

Given this scenario, it does appear that whilst both managers and leaders create an agenda for the college in mobilising human resources and focusing on outcomes, they seem to do these things in different ways. Whereas one is inspiring and producing change through influence and getting people to understand the vision, the other is organising and controlling staff and monitoring results

through procedures and policy guidelines. Bennis and Nanus (1985: 21) sum up the distinction between leadership and management as:

...activities of vision and judgment or effectiveness versus activities of mastering routines - efficiency.

From this discussion, it can be seen that within the practice of management of a technical or vocational college, the head must utilise leadership strategies and leadership skills, for effectiveness. This notion calls for the need to further examine the specific tasks and theories associated with the college's management and development, as an organisation.

## 2.7 Tasks and Theories in College Management and Development

A review of literature shows that leadership and management theories that could be used to describe the tasks involved in educational college management and its development, have been under close examination and have continued to be challenged over the years (Walsh 1991, Glatter 1996, Taylor and Hill 1997). In the early days of management studies, the classical organisation, according to Koontz and O'Donnell (1964), featured the 'Great Man Theory' propounded by Carlyle in 1910, suggesting that leaders in management could distinguish themselves in terms of physical strength, mental balance, energy, intelligence and creativity. This thinking received considerable attention. Later, Argyris' notion of 1962 showing the dilemma that could emerge if the distance between values and behaviour is great was challenged by Blake and Mouton's managerial grid of 1964 showing concern for both workers and

production as the optimum style for effectiveness. Various theories have come into play including Herzberg's 'two factor theory' of motivation in one's job versus need satisfaction and this was to an extent supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Fiedler's 1965 - 1967 contingency theory presented an enriched view of situation, and attempted to match leadership style with work context. The suggestion is that one engineers one's intellectual abilities to the organisation's climate, or in some cases, engineer the job to fit the manager.

From the sixties to the seventies, studies by Merton (cited in Hoy and Miskel 1991) do show that there was some movement in respect of models influencing leadership research, from the trait approach to the situational analysis and subsequently to the contingency approach.

According to Drucker (1977) the situational analysis viewed the leader in terms of the nature of the situation that had some relevance for his/her behaviour and performance. With the emergence of the contingency approach, leadership behaviour was considered to depend on multiple dimensions of conditions and situational variables.

In education management, Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999) have advanced the premise that the contingency theory tends to create a sense of value neutrality in emphasizing other factors such as environment and organisational problems. The danger is that managers can spend time thinking in a reactive manner about 'the way the winds are blowing' instead of getting on with proactive planning, especially in organisations where situations are not always stable, thus using the excuse 'it depends on ...'.



As this debate continues, some modern writers on learning organisations (Mintzberg 1989, Senge 1990, Dalin 1998) have suggested that theories in management and development of a teaching and learning organisation must be seen and applied within the context of five perspectives namely: structural perspective, humanistic perspective, political perspective, symbolic perspective and self perspective. Having understood these perspectives, Dalin (1998) suggests that it may become easier to translate the various theories into management tasks.

The structural perspective emerges from various management theories. Its aim, according to Garrett (1997), is to develop a management role that can serve as a bridge between the organisation and its environment and between the different subsystems in the organisation.

Within the structural perspective, management theories advocate efficiency, better co-ordination, optimal use of resources, appointing the right people in the right places and making necessary adjustments between the environment and the organisation, as both of these do change. Essentially, this perspective is about managing change. Fullan (1993: 8) acknowledges that:

...people with a knowledge of how to view, cope with and initiate change will manage change better than others.

From this analysis, it seems to me that this notion calls for the need to understand planned and unplanned change, desired and yet unexpected change which tends to occur in a college situation such as a serious unexpected illness of a student, or strike action by

students or a sudden resignation of a key lecturer or instructor or even a drastic cut in the budget allocation. Studies by Dalin (1998) tend to support this observation. Davies and Ellison (1997) do warn that change managers in colleges cannot force people to act and think differently but rather show understanding and support to individuals who are responding to the transition of change. In managing change, Garrett (1997) presents what he describes as 'a field force analysis'. This concept calls the manager of a learning organisation to watch out for the balance between driving forces and hindering forces in the process of moving from the present position to the desired position. For example, efficient use of resources could be a driving force for change whereas if staff members feel threatened by the idea, it becomes a hindering force.

In this situation Dalin (1998) warns that the manager or principal should carefully examine 'personal barriers', where the individual feels that his/her values and beliefs are being threatened, 'psychological barriers' in response to an inherent unwillingness to change, 'organisational barriers' where the structure of the college or system is not flexible enough to permit those changes and 'power barriers' where individual members of staff or students are unhappy about re-distribution of power. Therefore field force analysis will assist the principal in identifying whether there is a critical mass of support for a proposed change and to analyse the reasons for any barriers and also the far-reaching implications. Given this overview, it can be concluded that the structural perspective combines ; resource management, internal operations management, external environment management and change management. In this scenario, management is geared towards more efficiency.

The humanistic perspective, according to Mintzberg (1989) puts emphasis on the significance that management attaches to personal development of staff and interpersonal relationships. In this perspective Dalin (1998) points out that in a college or school situation, the principal as the manager should be able to release energy meant to be sensitive, understanding and analytical. This really means that he/she should possess interpersonal relationship skills since he/she is basically managing people. In colleges, Fullan (1993) warns that it is not so easy to develop the use of interpersonal skills in a situation where the integral part of action learning is questioning and reflection and not just programmed knowledge. In this regard Garrett (1997) suggests that as principals of colleges, if we are serious about the human element, we need constantly to ask questions about ourselves before asking about others, hence, the self-perspective.

The self-perspective challenges managers of learning organisations to critically reflect on their roles and on themselves, as role models to staff, students and the community. According to Van der Westhuizen (1991) the self-perspective notion stems from the management style of the principal, awareness of his calling, professionalism and value orientation.

It seems to me therefore that this perspective appears to view the manager of a college in his/her totality as it takes his/her internal self and external drive into account. Studies by Halpin (1966) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991: 632) show that the college manager can determine the 'organisational climate' of the school depending on his value orientation. It can be an 'open climate' where there is mutual candidness between himself and his staff or students or it can be a paternalistic climate, thus characterised by extreme

dissatisfaction, poor morale, forming of groups and passivity of the manager. In this regard Fullan (1993) emphasises the need for a manager of a college to evaluate himself by constantly checking on the 'organisational climate' prevailing at the college.

Dalin (1998) describes the political perspective as being concerned with power dimensions of management and a search for a better balance of power in the college. Within this perspective a principal may decide to distribute power and share leadership functions with other members of staff or committees and give them power in the management of the college. In this perspective Van der Westhuizen (1991) warns that the principal should not distribute his power as a means of running away from accountability. Sergiovanni (1991) on the other hand tends to support this notion of distribution of power provided that the principal is not running away from the 'McClelland's theory of self realisation'.

This theory stems from the notion that man prefers pleasant experiences and tries to avoid unpleasant ones in his achievement of objectives, so while errors create a feeling of failure, the manager should not run away from fear of failure by distributing his power. Given this analysis, I would tend to suggest that the political perspective is appropriate perhaps in terms of utilisation of brain power within the college and creating a sense of belonging and satisfaction amongst senior staff. But I maintain that management should be checked for its areas of accountability.

The symbolic perspective is concerned with the symbolic value that management has in the college. According to Senge (1990) the manager is essentially the master of ceremonies. He/she must therefore be able to judge accurately which functions are critical to

the college and which ceremonies must be conducted and how. In this regard, Garrett (1977) warns that the manager of a learning organisation should exploit opportunities as they emerge and exercise his professionalism and leadership skills in managing such ceremonies. This he/she must do in a confident - inspiring manner.

The dynamics of how tasks are managed determines the success of any college. It is therefore essential to recognise that tasks within the purview of college management in education, cannot be based on one theory alone. This notion is supported by Hanson (1985) who stresses a synthesis approach, which tends to combine scientific approaches, classical management approaches and organisation development approaches borrowed from psychology and sociology insights. Hence, the synthesis management approach which emphasises skills of management and skills to form relationships.

In this study, I tend to be persuaded by this approach since management is an all-embracing human activity whilst 'organisational diagnosis' tends to be an essential variable in college improvement, as we have observed in this chapter. Given these above mentioned theories which could be applied in college management and governance, it is my considered opinion that the key management tasks of planning, organising, guiding, controlling and evaluating, can only be improved and therefore revitalised if management and all key actors in governance understand their roles within the system.

## 2.8 Individual Actors' Interpretation of their Role in Governance

Mintzberg (1989) defines a role as 'organised sets of behaviour belonging to identifiable offices or position' (cited in Hanson 1985: 168). If we accept this definition, it becomes clearer for the researcher to understand the various dimensions emerging from the concept of role.

Hoehn (1974) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991: 90) acknowledges that:

...it is the difference between the idealised role and the actual role of an educational leader that can affect matters such as effectiveness, leadership and morale.

This tends to suggest a further articulation of the concept of role and its dimensions. In my view, the concept of role involves the behaviour of a person within an organisation as determined by the relationships, events and as determined by his office, or obligations of his or her job. In this context, various descriptions of a role could emerge.

The descriptions that may have a bearing on college governance have been advanced by Mintzberg (1989) as follows:

- role prescription - general norms for the role as prescribed by the community, (general patterns of behaviour ought to be),
- role expectations - expectations which one person has of someone else's behaviour within a certain role,

- role understanding - a person's understanding of other people's expectations of his role,
- role conflict - role expectation of a person and his intellectual or social abilities,
- role set - the hierarchical structure of the organization's authority figures and subordinates.

Having looked at the concept of role, the roles of key players in this study will be examined further and discussed.

### 2.8.1 The Principal, the Individual and the Manager

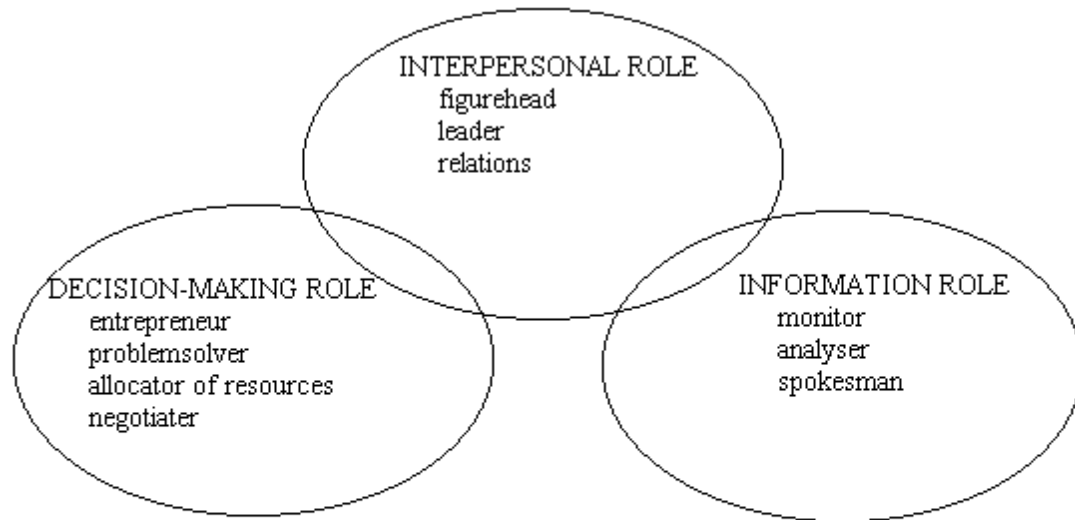
Potgieter's (1972) studies cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991 ) represent the role of the principal of a school in South Africa as being very complex and therefore always dynamic. This is because of the continual interplay between main groups and sub-groups, figures of authority and subordinates, staff and students, between parent-teacher association and school committee or managing council and between reporting to a school board and reporting to a circuit inspector.

From this observation it can be inferred that the principal's role could be described as a leader, liaison person, monitor, negotiator, representative and allocator of resources. If we take the principal's role and equate it to the role of a manager within the South African context, Smit and Cronje (1992) will support Mintzberg's (1989) studies that the various roles played by managers can be classified

into three overlapping groups, namely, an interpersonal role, a decision-making role and information role as shown below:

Figure III

### MINTZBERG'S ROLE DIMENSION OF MANAGERS



SOURCE: Smith & Cronje (1992 : 35)

Some authors (Roe and Drake 1980, Fiedler and Chermers 1984, Garrett 1997) regard the research that was carried out by Mintzberg on the different roles of a manager as being quite useful in explaining the kind of skills required in the execution of management tasks. In this case, the skills that have been defined by Smit and Cronje (1992: 37) are “conceptual skills, interpersonal skills and technical skills”. Conceptual skills refer to the mental or intellectual ability to analyse the operations of the organisation holistically whereas technical skills would tend to mean the ability of the manager to use



the knowledge and techniques of a specific discipline to attain objectives, such as the principal using his pedagogical training to supervise the performance of teachers or instructors under him.

In further describing the management role of a principal, Sergiovanni (1991: 15) points out that a successful principal is one who:

... must master the art of managing complexity and key to this mastery is knowing the difference between effective, efficient and good practice and the difference that exist between ideal views of administrative work as proposed by theorists and actual descriptions of work that evolve from the world of practice.

Studies cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991) showing that in the Southern Africa region, principals manage complexity, appear to be supported by similar studies of American colleges in Louisiana conducted by Miklos (1980) cited in Sergiovanni (1991: 19). In these studies, task areas involve: managing the school programme, pupil/students, staff, community relations, physical facilities, financial resources and equipment, through careful planning, decision-making, organising, co-ordinating, communicating, influencing and evaluating. Roe and Drake (1980) have advanced a tri-dimensional concept of analysing principalship. They maintain that the role of the principal must be looked at in relation to the job itself, the social setting for the job and the person appointed for the job, as he/she relates to both the job and the social setting. In further analysing the job, Sergiovanni (1991) points out that in fact the principal is managing three things, namely the technical aspects which relate to structures and events, the human aspects which involve the managing of psychological factors such as needs and the educational aspects.

The way in which these three things are managed will, according to Van der Westhuizen (1991) impact on the formation of a particular cultural life encompassing norms, shared assumptions, beliefs and habits, prevailing at that school or college. This notion suggests to me that perhaps the principal is managing a good number of invisible things such as compliance and shared values within the context of articulating the college mission, policies and purpose. In managing the invisible things concerning the human aspects, the principal appears to be managing the organisational culture. According to Everard and Morris (1996:151) organisational culture in school management covers:

.... such intangibles as the tone, its value system , the standard by which merit is judged, personal relationships, habits, unwritten values of conduct and the practice of educational judgement.

Given this definition, I maintain that the notion of culture in technical and vocational colleges refers to the climate and practices that are developed by management in its dealings with the people.

Hoy and Miskel (1991) have pointed out that one of the ways in which managers of educational organisations can get their systems to be more effective in the face of environmental pressure is to understand the concept of culture and its dynamics. Schein (1992) supports this notion on the premise that organisational cultures are created in part by leaders. Schein (1992: 5) further argues that one of the most “decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management and sometimes the destruction of the organizational culture”.

A deeper understanding of cultural issues such as customs, traditions, group norms, rules of the game, formal philosophy and behaviour patterns, is therefore essential in managing a college. Schein (1992: 15) further warns that if leaders are not conscious of cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them “since culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin.”

The question then emerges: does the principal understand the dynamics of his/her role? In Louisiana according to a survey cited in Roe and Drake (1980) principals were provided with a clearly defined job description upon engagement and most principals saw programme development of curriculum and professional development of staff as their most important areas of responsibility. In this study Roe and Drake (1980) provide a copy of a job description available to them by the principals, showing the following clearly defined sub-headings:

- Job title.
- Job goal.
- Report to:
- Division.
- Supervisor.
- Job Responsibilities (seventeen duties)
- Job Specification and qualifications needed for the job.
- Employment factors.
- Evaluation (how and when the principal shall be evaluated).

In getting managers to understand their role Rue and Byars (1992) argue that the crucial issue is to get them to understand the critical

information relating to the nature of the job through a well defined job description and a job specification.

In this case, various theorists on educational management (Glatter 1986, Oakland 1989, Murgatroyd and Morgan 1994, Stewart 1991, Dalin 1998) do agree that a job description is fundamentally a written statement that identifies the specific tasks, duties, activities and performance results required in a particular job whereas a job specification should, in a written form, point out the abilities, skills, traits or attributes necessary for successful performance of a job. Whereas it may not be too necessary to supply the new manager or principal with a job specification, Drucker (1977) argues that a well-documented job description is the prime tool to be given to any individual if he/she is to understand his/her role.

In Zimbabwe's colleges of technical and vocational education, a typical job description for the principal was availed to the researcher by the permanent secretary for the Ministry of Higher Education on 14 August 1998 and it appears as follows:

Job Title : Principal II

Job Description : While the appointee shall be responsible for everything that goes on in the college, he/she shall have the following particular responsibilities:

- supervision of both professional and ancillary staff;
- accounting for all college assets and moneys;
- ensure proper implementation of ministry policy and regulations;
- maintaining smooth relations with other relevant professional organisations;

- maintenance of good discipline throughout the college;
- contributing to curriculum development implementation and evaluation;
- deployment of professional staff in appropriate departments and subject areas;
- maintaining the welfare of the whole college community;
- acting as public relations officer for the college;
- ensuring adequate catering for students;
- setting and maintaining a positive overall professional tone for the college.

From this job description, it can be observed that the specific job responsibilities in some cases are rather too broad and not specific. Van der Westhuizen (1991) has warned that if the job description is not clear, this can cause problems for both the person to whom the principal is reporting and to the principal himself. Hanson (1985) supports this argument on the basis that evaluation areas for performance are delineated by the job description, hence the need for its explicitness.

Given this scenario it will be necessary in this research to critically analyse and compare the Zimbabwe job description of a principal to the interpretation of that job description by the three principals involved in the three colleges of vocational and technical education defined as the case studies in this research.

The next chapter should assist the researcher in identifying the appropriate techniques and tools for doing this.

## 2.8.2 The Industrialist behind the College

According to literature obtained from the Government of Zimbabwe, an industrial advisory council called the National Manpower Advisory Council was formed by the Ministry of Higher Education in terms of the Manpower Planning and Development Act, Number 4 of 1994. This Act superseded the Manpower Planning and Development Act of 1984, the Vocational Education and Training Act of 1978 and the Apprenticeship Training and Skilled Manpower Development Act of 1968. Essentially the 1994 Act makes provisions for the Minister of Higher Education to appoint a National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO) composed of 20 members drawn from professional, industrial and commercial organisations in Zimbabwe.

Under the chairmanship of a NAMACO member there are various Industrial Advisory Committees from a diverse range of industries, namely:

Aircraft, Automotive, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering industries, the Construction, Printing, Hairdressing, Hotel and Catering, Food Processing, Plastics and Rubber, Textile, Clothing, Leather, Mining, Chemical and Fertiliser industries, Business Occupations, Timber industry, Financial Sector, the Informal, Small and Medium Scale Sector.

Source: NAMACO's functions - Director of Manpower Planning

(August 1998) Harare

Given these diverse industrial sectors organised through their bodies and professional institutes, there are educational and training operational linkages between these NAMACO Advisory Committees

and all the technical and vocational colleges, through College Advisory Councils.

At the college level there is the College Advisory Council, chaired by an industrialist drawn from an industrial organisation represented in NAMACO and composed of both members appointed from commerce and industry by the minister on the recommendations of the principal and members appointed by NAMACO as representatives of NAMACO at the college level. The role of the College Advisory Council is to continuously make recommendations to the principal on syllabi and content issues concerning courses being run at that technical or vocational college. The principal is therefore advised together with his heads of departments (sitting together) on how best to run the technical and vocational programmes, relevance of the courses to the changing job market, technological changes or information on advances in technology affecting specific occupations being addressed in the college curriculum.

The Act Number 4 of 1994 appears silent on the frequency of contacts and meetings of colleges and their Advisory Councils. But, the onus on calling for such meetings is in the hands of the principals whilst compensation for travelling expenses and the relevant sitting allowances for each member, are issues provided for by the head office machinery through its contacts with the college based finance registrar.

According to Middleton *et al.* (1993) the success of any technical and vocational programme depends to a great extent on the active involvement of business and industry people in college curriculum review issues. Verma (1990) supports this notion but further argues that colleges must create a climate for this collaboration.

Given this scenario, it becomes appropriate for this study to ask if the role of the 'man' or industrialist behind the college is being understood by the principal and other key players. The next chapter therefore should seek to address the appropriate tools that are needed to address this role expectation.

### 2.8.3 The Man in Head Office

In Zimbabwe's Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, the principal of a technical or vocational college reports to the Director of Manpower Planning and Development who in turn, reports to the Permanent Secretary. The 'man' in the head office in the context of this research, is both the director and the permanent secretary. In terms of what Roe and Drake (1980) define as the social setting for the job, documentary sources obtained in August 1998 show that these 'men' in head office are fully equipped with the following government reference materials for their activities in governance of technical colleges:

- Treasury Instructions in terms of the Audit and Exchequer Act, Chapter 168, revised in 1979;
- Accounting Procedures Manual, revised in 1984;
- Accounting Officer's Instructions, revised in 1990.

The Treasury Instructions specify the role of the principal in terms of certain procedures, as representing the permanent secretary at the



institution and the roles of people in head office as representing the permanent secretary in terms of carrying out specific functions that involve financial aspects and assets such as collection of revenue and how it should be done, expenditure control systems, formal tender systems and methods of controlling government assets in colleges. These Treasury Instructions are further simplified in the Accounting Procedures Manual kept in head office and at the college by both the principal and his finance registrar.

Details of purchasing, procurement of supplies and services, control and disposal of assets, maintenance of assets registers and commitment registers, handling various accounts, loans, grants, journal vouchers and payments, are all defined in terms of procedures. The permanent secretary through his auditors may use these instruments to check on how the principal is performing in his role of managing finance, equipment and services, at his college.

Literature obtained in head office appears to show that this is the only formally structured way of evaluating the performance of the principal and this is restricted to his role in managing finance, assets and services provided to the college. Records of meetings shown to the researcher in August 1998 indicate that other methods employed to monitor the effectiveness of college management are policy circulars from head office, telephone calls in the event of a crisis and occasional visits of approximately one per year by the permanent secretary or his director of manpower planning and development.

Analysing head office and the college from the standpoint of systems analysis, Roe and Drake (1980) have advanced a warning on accountability. In college situations where management is only held accountable for certain details that leave out the education business

of teaching and learning, problems could emerge since the various parts relate to each other and to the whole. Sergiovanni (1999) further warns that there could be problems if the man in head office lacks the technical skills necessary to appreciate the competencies needed for principalship and the experiences that the principal goes through. This is possible in cases where head office personnel are appointed on the basis of perhaps their other administrative experiences not relating to college management or on the basis of political perspectives.

I therefore tend to support Dalin's (1998) notion that colleges are by their very nature always going through change therefore good and effective governance should focus on the interaction between an idea and the organisation and its environment, rather than focus heavily on procedures and policies. Development as a process, in my view, implies going through minor technical variations, hence the need to understand the paradigm shift in the role of the 'man' in head office, in terms of the need for compromise, flexibility and collaboration within a common interest.

## 2.9 Conclusion

The chapter on the related theoretical framework has covered issues that the researcher considers relevant to this study. The chapter started with an examination of the broad concept of governance within the context of technical and vocational colleges.

In this regard, various models have been analysed given the complex relationship between the college and government and between the college and industry, in their efforts to produce a skilled worker for

the Zimbabwean economy. The machinery for producing these skilled people is the college, hence its examination for effectiveness and efficiency as a complex organisation with goals, beliefs and unique demands. Various issues have also emerged such as accountability, authority, power and control and these have necessitated the study to further look at literature relating to management and leadership. Theories and tasks in college management and development have unearthed the issue of the role dimension. In this regard literature was reviewed and documentary sources analysed from the standpoint of the role of key players in this study and from the standpoint that colleges are unique dynamic organisations.

Given this review of literature it is clear that the practice of governance as a social phenomenon needs to be understood in cognisance of people's values, orientation and beliefs hence the need to look at methodological tools that address the interpretative paradigm. The principal appears to be occupying a complex management role which requires him to effectively manage; information, self, resource utilisation, adaptability, goal attainment, human beings of a varied nature i.e. staff, students, community members, industrialists and head office staff, all within a complex process of transforming 'inputs' into 'usable outputs'.

These issues demand an appropriate method of enquiry within the total system of both management and governance. Such an approach is supported by Garrett (1997) cited in Davies and Ellison (1997: 106) who acknowledges that:

There is no right answer to the problem, and any problem action will be dependent on the nature of

the problem, the situation and the individuals involved. The danger is that we get so close to our problem that we lose sight of the whole picture and make assumptions as to its real nature.

I am thus persuaded not to use my programmed knowledge in such complex situations but to confront the three case studies holistically and immerse myself in the data and seek to understand the management and governance scenario in Zimbabwe's colleges of technical and vocational education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.1 Research Methodology and Process

Robson (1997:38) has advanced this suggestion to anyone seeking to pursue a scientific research design:

The general principle is that the research strategy or strategies and the research method or methods, must be appropriate for the question you want to ask.

Based on this advice, this chapter characterises the entire research process, the methodology and the range of approaches used to gather data for an analysis and interpretation in order to understand and explain the dynamics of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe.

I provide a rationale for my research approaches and my choice to explain the nature of governance and management through case studies of three vocational and technical institutions. I then move on to describe my data gathering techniques, their location and appropriateness to this research, followed by a description of my approach to data analysis.

Contemporary writings on the methodological paradigms (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Borg and Gall 1989, Cohen and Manion 1997, Robson 1997) have highlighted the appropriateness of adopting a liberal interpretive framework in research practices that reflect on descriptions and explanations of people's problems and situations.

The practice of governance as a social phenomenon needs to be understood in cognisance of people's sensitivities, beliefs and values, hence, the adoption of an interpretive approach, in an attempt to let issues emerge. According to Wamahi (1995: 115) the interpretive approach allows the researcher to seek "to understand the insider's view as opposed to the outsider's view of the process and situation at its roots". This approach is suitable in explaining issues of relationships between college management and its outside environment through an understanding of views expressed by key participants or major stakeholders in the arena of governance and management.

According to Cohen and Manion (1997: 29) positivistic approaches "tend to ignore or presume subjects' interpretations of situations" whereas the post-positivistic paradigm, adopted in this research, will tend to concentrate upon ways in which "individual persons construe their social world". An interpretive approach in this study is characterised by the concern for an understanding of the "subjective world" of human experiences of governance and management practices of technical and vocational education, hence their perceptions.

In this paradigm, the role of theory is critical. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) it is preferred that theory emerges from the data. In this research, theory will arise from particular situations, yielding insights and understanding of key participants' behaviour in governance and management of technical and vocational institutions. To some extent, such emergent theory, defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985:42) as "grounded theory", will be connected with theoretical frameworks from similar contexts in order to fully

explain the meaning-making process. In carrying out the entire research process, I take cognisance of Seidman's (1998) advice that whatever results obtained, the success and adequacy of the research in addressing the purpose depend on the research process and methodology.

### 3.2 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994:3) have provided a comprehensive definition of qualitative research as:

An attempt to capture the sense that lies within and that structures what we say about what we do; an exploration, elaboration and systematisation of the significance of an identified phenomenon; the illuminative representation of the meaning of a delimited issue or problem.

Based on this defined conception, I have chosen a qualitative approach to my study for a number of reasons. First, I have designed the study on governance and the principal's management role with real individual participants in mind situated in their social settings at the institution or in head office in the case of policy-makers for these colleges or in industry as beneficiaries of skilled manpower produced by technical and vocational colleges.

This research looks at complex relationships involving college management, head office and industry within the systems of governance and management. In this situation, Janesick (1994:212) has shown that "a qualitative design is appropriate in understanding and explaining relationships within a system or within a culture". In this study, the approach focuses on understanding these individual

participants managing the college, designing policy from head office and advising the college from the perspective of the private industrial sector.

Second, qualitative design is holistic by nature. According to Silverman (1993), it looks at the larger picture, the whole picture and begins with a search for understanding of the whole. This study is looking at the whole picture of governance and management in a technical and vocational college. In order to understand the people, Seidman (1998) has suggested the need to understand the given social setting and not necessarily to make predictions about that setting. In this study, I also seek to understand the social settings involving the jobs of principals in technical and vocational colleges within the broad areas of governance. As pointed out in chapter one, this is because during the past ten years of Zimbabwe's post independence era the national print media have featured issues and concerns in respect of problems emerging in these colleges.

Various theorists on qualitative research (Miles and Huberman 1984, Silverman 1993, Janesick 1994 and Yin 1994) have suggested that questions pertaining to the social context of a teaching and learning system and the hidden socio-political aspects of management are best suited to qualitative inquiry since the qualitative design is responsive to ethical concerns. It also incorporates informed consent decisions.

Qualitative designs, according to Seidman (1998) require the researcher to become the research instrument. This means that the researcher must have the ability to observe behaviour and must sharpen the skills necessary for observation and face-to-face interview. This in a sense tends to bring the researcher much closer



to the data and allows some flexibility in responding to situations with tact and understanding. Since my research touches on some sensitive issues of who is blamed and for what, I find it appropriate to enter the technical and vocational education setting as the research instrument, with the relevant skills for face-to-face in-depth interviews and observations, as applicable and appropriate in a qualitative design. Given my intended focus and approach, I agree with Janesick (1994:21) that:

Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study.

As a characteristic of a qualitative design approach my research features triangulation of methods and triangulation of sources of data. There will be checks and balances that will include capturing and interpreting the meanings in what the principals, the industrialists and the permanent secretary say and in what I observe and well as in what I note in minutes, reports and documents. I therefore chose this design since I focus on explanations of issues involving sensitivity flexibility, relationships and adaptability in all the three case studies. All design issues that will further be discussed in this chapter relate to these acts.

### 3.3 Rationale for Multiple Case Studies

Yin (1984) maintains that research questions on what and how within interpretivism are best answered through an explanatory case study. Robson (1993), Cohen and Manion (1994) and Wamahi (1995:115) support this notion as the appropriate method that seeks to describe the situation "at its roots". In this regard, the research

will encompass three case studies purposefully selected on the basis of ensuring a wide geographical coverage as follows: one polytechnic from the northern part of the country (Harare Polytechnic), one technical college from the central part of Zimbabwe, (Kwekwe Technical College) and one vocational training centre from the southern part of Zimbabwe (Westgate Vocational Training Centre). This selection is out of the total of ten polytechnics, technical colleges and vocational training centres spread throughout Zimbabwe. Polytechnics are the largest of the three categories in terms of enrolment capacities whereas technical colleges are medium-sized and vocational training centres are the smallest.

Robson (1997:146) claimed that a case study is essentially:

A strategy for doing research which involves empirical investigation of some particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.

Stake (1995:1) provided a similar definition but emphasised that a case study is “that study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”.

In this research I am looking at important relationships, roles and events involving institutions and in doing so, I am looking at individuals within their social settings involving governance of these institutions. Yin (1994:14) suggested the conception of a holistic multi-case design, in the same manner that “one would be doing multiple experiments”, through a process of separate individual units, with each unit being a subject of an individual case study.

Herriot and Firestone (1983) cited in Yin (1994:45) have advanced an argument that:

The evidence from multi-case studies is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust.

In my research, if similar findings are obtained from all the three colleges, then Yin's (1994:45) "replication logic" will have taken place. My thoughts for choosing multi-case studies were guided by the logic advanced by Yin (1994:4) and Robson (1997:161). The fundamental argument is that the three case studies may replicate each other, or subsequent studies may build upon the first case study thus carrying the inquiry a step further or the three case studies may just complement each other by focusing on those issues that may not have been unearthed by each individual case. All these strategies and processes finally make the findings more "robust". Thus a separate analysis across the three institutions will be made and the data discussed in a separate chapter.

Given this conceptual framework on multi-case studies, I agree with Robson (1997) that while I embark on multi-case studies, every case (institution) will serve a specific purpose of explaining issues and concerns in governance and management of a technical and vocational college, within the overall scope of the inquiry. Convergent evidence that may arise will be identified, and conclusions from each case and these will be discussed and analysed.

In my two final chapters featuring data analysis and discussion and conclusions and recommendations, I shall be guided by the advice of Yin, Bateman and Moore (1993) cited in Yin (1994:49) which

suggests the combination of the results from the individual case studies with the multi-case results, as the focus of my summary reports. Thus, for each college, the results will indicate problems of governance impacting on that particular college, whereas across the three cases, the findings will indicate why problems of governance and management are similar or different or peculiar to each college.

### 3.4 Preparation for the Field Investigation

Having classified the design and the approach of my research, my next step was to prepare for the field investigation, which meant going to Zimbabwe for at least six weeks. This was with a view to observing issues on the ground, visiting the three colleges, talking to principals, industrialists and top officials in the head office as well as examining appropriate documents. As I prepared to gather data, my thoughts were guided by the six broad research questions whose significance is explained in chapter one of this research report.

The broad questions are:

- What is the nature of governance in a technical and vocational college?
- What management role does the principal occupy in the governance of an institution and how does he/she understand that role?
- What is industry's involvement in the governance of an institution that prepares its graduates for the labour market?

- How is government as the responsible authority involved in ensuring that the institution is managed effectively?
- What are the issues and concerns in the governance relationship involving college management, industry and government?
- What recommendations and corrective interventions could be made in order to make the system of governance more effective?

These questions guided me in the selection of my participants in the three case studies. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is always critical to concentrate on those participants who are likely to provide the most meaningful and relevant information. It became clearer that I was going to be exposed to the thoughts, emotions and attitudes of key players in the governance and management of a technical and vocational college.

I therefore took Bromley's (1986:24) suggestion that I had to develop and sharpen certain research skills:

If ... the enquiry deals with episodes of deep emotional significance ... it can be carried out only by someone trained and equipped to establish and manage a close ... long and possibly difficult personal relationship.

In recognising this suggestion, I embarked on developing certain major skills and personal qualities in accordance with Robson (1997:163) as follows:

- 'an inquiring mind' or questioning why things are happening or have happened that way;
- good and careful listening skills without any bias, capturing exact words, mood and affective components;
- grasp of the issues involved with a view to interpret and not simply record or miss out on clues and contradictions;
- adaptiveness and flexibility (need for adaptive and rigorous without losing focus);
- general sensitivity and responsiveness to contradictory evidence;
- lack of bias and the need to be open to contrary findings.

With the support of my supervisor and acting on his advice, I initially sought permission to carry out this research from the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology in Zimbabwe (see Appendix). My next step was to contact all participants by telephone, followed by a letter requesting permission to listen to and understand their stories through focused in-depth interviews and observations. Also I had to request that their annual reports, policy memos and minutes of their board meetings be made available to me upon my visit to their institutions. An itinerary was subsequently planned in such a way that I could take leave from my job in Lesotho and visit each college for at least three to five working days for the field work. Finally, I proceeded to Zimbabwe with my plan containing details of the data collection procedures to be used and the general rules to be followed.

### 3.5 Data Gathering

As suggested by various theorists (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Seidman 1989, Yin 1994, Robson 1997) the initial stage of data gathering in a case-study method requires the researcher to design a set of questions for each category of participants, from the broad research questions, with accompanying list of probable sources of evidence and data matrices. This according to Yin (1994) helps in further deciding on the techniques and tools to be employed in the data collection exercise. I adopted this approach and came out with semi-structured but focused questions for the principals, industrialist and head office senior staff. The nature of those questions compelled me to adopt various ways of collecting data from various sources as will be explained later in this chapter.

#### 3.5.1 Triangulation of Data Sources

Based on Stake's (1995) advice on the search for accuracy and alternative explanations in a case study, I had to build in triangulation of data sources as a special tool in the data collection techniques. According to McFee (1992:215) in triangulation of data sources, "data are built-up from inputs of various perspectives whilst addressing one issue". In this research I had to ask the same question about views on relationships, issues and concerns in governance and management of a technical and vocational college to the principal, to the chairperson of the college advisory council representing industry and to the permanent secretary and his director in head office, representing government through the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology.

My rationale for adopting triangulation of data sources is further substantiated in Cohen and Manion (1997) who have claimed that the reality of a situation is not to be appreciated from a single viewpoint. In this regard, I came to the realisation that the reality of governance and management of a technical and vocational college must bring to bear more viewpoints with a view to account for all these viewpoints. Using this type of triangulation, I am able to obtain what McFee (1992) called 'quality data' in my research. The issue under investigation is therefore a whole situation comprised by the combination of various viewpoints. As a technology educator myself, my analogy from plane geometry is that any solid structure supported only at two or less points, is a very unstable one. If however, the structure is supported at three or more points in the same plane, then it attains more stability.

### 3.5.2 Triangulation of Methods

In this research no single method was considered fully adequate to explore and explain the governance and management issues of a technical and vocational college in Zimbabwe. Cohen and Manion (1997:169) have suggested the use of multiple methods of data gathering. Their argument is that:

Multiple methods are more stable when a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought, has special relevance where a complex phenomenon requires elucidation ... and where a more controversial aspect of education needs to be analysed more fully.

This type of triangulation has been defined by McFee (1992:215) as "triangulation between methods". He argued that it applies to situations in which "mutual validation" is sought, when addressing



one and the same issue. Stake (1995) further illustrated that if one succeeded in triangulation between methods, one would have a reason to be more confident about the soundness of one's data. I therefore decided in this research to increase the confidence of my interpretation of issues and concerns of governance and management by employing triangulation of methods and between methods.

I followed up interviews with direct observations of the management and organisational processes in a technical and vocational college. I further followed up those observations with reviews of college records, annual reports, and minutes of important management meetings at the college and relevant policy and legislative documents relating to college governance.

As I was doing so, the triangulation concept was assisting me in revisiting my research questions. This whole process helped me to appreciate that some issues were not as simple as I had initially thought.

In this multiple-case design, each individual case study had both methodological triangulation and source triangulation. I decided to combine the two, based on Stake's (1995) suggestion of combining the two for quality of data and for cross validation of data. In this research therefore there is diffusion of triangulation of methods and data sources.

### 3.5.3 Interviews

Interviews with open-ended questions have been suggested by many writers (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Cohen and Manion 1993, Yin 1994 ,

Seidman 1997) as useful “friendly conversations” that are appropriate for building up and exploring responses to complex issues. According to Seidman (1997:4) if such interviews are in-depth then they could serve as the most appropriate primary method of investigation. According to him, “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (*ibid.*: 3). In this research, in-depth meaning of the informants’ experiences, perceptions and concerns relating to governance were discovered through in-depth interviews.

These involved principals of the three technical institutions, chairpersons of the college advisory council for the respective institutions and the permanent secretary for the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, as well as the director of manpower planning in the same ministry. Seidman (1997) is not alone in advocating in-depth interviews in case studies of educational institutions. Ferrarotti (1981) cited in Seidman (1997:4) had this to say:

The primary way a research can investigate an educational organisation, institution or process is through the experience of the individual people, the “others” who make up the organisation or carry out the process. Social abstractions like “education” are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the abstractions are built.

Based on this conceptual understanding, I found it important to focus the semi-structured interviews of my participants whilst addressing the emotional and intellectual connections between their work demands and their lives. I adopted Robson’s (1993:236) advice

of listing the topics that I wanted responses to and designed an interview schedule with an introductory comment such as “It’s nice to be here and to listen to your story about your job ...”. I made a list of key questions under specific topic headings such as “managing finance, managing people, managing internal operations and managing the environment” and added some closing comments. For each interview, I was guided by suggestions made by Cohen and Manion (1997). They have advised “focused interviews” as an approach which provides people’s views and feelings to emerge whilst allowing the interviewer some control. I had to do this since my days in Zimbabwe were limited.

I therefore made provision for at least three hours with one participant on one day then followed up the interview with the same person again for at least three hours on the following day. The first day would focus on the role or the work of the participant and the second day would focus on problems associated with the role or the work of the participants.

The interview schedules were discussed with my supervisor for clarity, wording, logical sequence and more importantly to ensure that the questions were not leading questions, double-barrelled or biased, as further suggested by Bromley (1986), Wamahu (1995), and Cohen and Manion (1997). This was important since I was more interested in subjective meanings accorded to governance and management issues rather than merely eliciting responses within some form of a standard format. To me the issues of governance and management appeared too complex to investigate through quantitative means.

Banister *et al.* (1994:50) warned that:

In exploring roles, relationships and ethical issues with professionals, it is unlikely that you would gain a sufficiently sensitive and incisive grasp of your participants' concerns by administering a questionnaire with rating scale categories.

In this research, my aim in choosing to use focused interviews of an in-depth nature with open-ended questions (see appendices), was geared towards exploring precisely those areas where my participants would perceive gaps, contradictions, difficulties and sensitivities. As such I chose to develop and use a guide as suggested by Seidman (1991)

#### 3.5.4 Documentary Sources

Yin (1994:92) has argued that the use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies far exceeds that in other research strategies. According to him, the use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies “allows an investigation to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioral issues”. He cited Patton (1987) as claiming that “the most important advantage for using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry”, a process of triangulation discussed earlier in this chapter.

In this research I decided to expand my sources of evidence to include the examination of documentary sources. As suggested by Banister *et al.* (1994) documents are helpful in verifying the correctness of titles, dates, spellings and names that might have been mentioned in the interview. Yin (1994) further advised that

documents are helpful to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources.

Consequently, I had to arrange access to examine the following documents at each institution:

- letters from head office to the college;
- minutes of college advisory council meetings;
- memoranda;
- notice board clippings and other articles of a policy nature;
- legislative Acts dealing with governance issues;
- policy procedures and rules of the institution.

In doing so, I had to be careful of biased selectivity by the participant, as warned by Robson (1997). In the case of my research, I found the documents extremely useful in addressing questions about communication and networking between the institution and head office and between the college advisory council and college management. Through inferences, I was able to follow-up certain questions with the participants on my third visit to the organisation. I therefore used documentary sources as advised by Yin (1994:80) for complementarity of data and for triangulation with a view to strengthen the validity and quality of data.

### 3.5.5 Observations

Observations in the context of this research concern the naturally occurring behaviour of people and events in a technical and vocational college. This is in line with the definition of observation provided by Marshall and Rossman (1989:79) cited in Banister *et al.*

(1994:19) which states that “observation is a systematic description of events, behaviors and artifacts in the social setting under study” . In my research I am concerned with getting to understand ‘real’ people, staff, students, principals, industrialists and head office personnel involved in governance of a technical and vocational institution. As a way of experiencing what they experience and in order to unravel what is taken for granted or find out more about implicit social rules in a college setting, I chose to use observation as an additional technique of gathering data.

Argle (1987) cited in Banister *et al.* (1994:21) has argued for the use of observations in obtaining non-verbal cues such as style of speaking, speed at which people work, voice tones interruptions, facial expressions, greeting rituals and gestures etc. He is not alone on this notion. Webb *et al.* (1981) cited in Robson (1997: 282) have suggested the use of observations as a way of “establishing findings on the basis of observing evidence left behind by people”, such as wear and tear of buildings or equipment. Based on these varied suggestions, I adopted the observation technique as I looked at interactions of college management, staff and students. Also, I looked at the state of buildings machinery, equipment, instructor-student ratios and actions of people in the three case studies and jotted down my observations as suggested by Yin (1994) . Those observations became very useful in complementing interview data and in interpretation of the varied situations in the three technical and vocational colleges.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

Kvale (1996:231) has presented an argument that some qualitative researchers have dismissed validity and reliability as “oppressive

positivist concepts that hamper creative and emancipatory qualitative research”.

He has however advanced the notion that from a post-modern perspective, issues of validity and reliability should be discussed in terms of the true value of findings, from the context of “trustworthiness, credibility dependability and confirmability” (Kvale 1996:232). This tends to suggest that the present approach is not to reject the concepts but to re-conceptualise them in forms relevant to the research design.

In this research there is diffusion of triangulation of data sources with triangulation of methods as discussed earlier in this chapter. According to Yin (1994), that diffusion provides validation of the investigation. Robson (1997) supports the notion that the adequacy of the design and the methods used point to the validity of the knowledge produced, if we take validity to mean the truth and correctness of the data. Validation is not only an issue of method. Kvale (1996:244) has pointed out that deciding whether a method investigates what it intends to investigate involves a theoretical conception of what is investigated. Thus in terms of grounded theory which characterise this interpretive research verifying interpretations becomes an intrinsic part of the generation of theory, hence validation through theorising. Also in this research, there is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) have defined as pragmatic validation in the sense that apart from dialogue, there is confirmation of what I observe in the three case studies.

Reliability, according to Cohen and Manion (1997) refers to the consistency of the research findings. In this research such issues relate to the need for unbiased interviews, avoidance of leading

questions and the need to avoid being over-impressionistic in observations, as warned by various theorists (Banister *et al.* 1994, Yin 1994, Kvale 1996).

Throughout my research, I shall stand to be guided by claims made by Hammersley (1990) cited in Silverman (1993:155) that we can only judge knowledge claims on the basis of:

...the plausibility of the claim, given our existing knowledge, the credibility of the claim given the nature of the phenomena, circumstances of the research and characteristics of the researcher and where we have doubt, we need to be convinced by the plausibility and credibility of the evidence.

This advice tends to suit my research which falls within a paradigm that demands a flexible approach in studying governance and management in their natural college settings and in studying processes and outcomes as well as meanings and causes to issues and concerns.

### 3.7 Generalisability and Transferability

There are two forms of generalisability namely, natural generalisation based on personal experiences and analytical generalisation based on reasoned judgement about the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation. Kvale (1996) has observed that in life people tend to make generalisations from their own experiences. In case studies, Stake (1995:85) makes a point that naturalistic generalisation is based on conclusions arrived at through personalistic descriptions of experiences. In this research, the results emerging from the



uniqueness of these individual cases could be contextualised, as will be explained further in chapter eight, hence, the issue of transferability (Kvale 1996) to varied situations of similar settings.

As such, the methodology used in this research is geared towards transferability of issues and interventions emerging at Westgate, Kwekwe and Harare Polytechnic to other technical institutions of similar characteristics, thus providing the validity of generalisation.

### 3.8 Ethical Issues in the Research Process

The issues of ethics in carrying out research are critical. Kvale (1996) has pointed out that any credible scientific research should be carried out within the framework of some fundamental ethical guidelines known to researchers. In line with this notion, Miles and Huberman (1994:288) posed some fundamental questions which could be considered by the researcher:

Do people really understand what they are getting into? Am I exploiting people with my “innocent” questions? What about their privacy? Do respondents have a right to see my report? What good is anonymity if people and their colleagues can easily recognise themselves in a case study? Who will benefit and who will lose as a result of my study?

Guided by those ethical questions, I made a list of potential key respondents and made frantic efforts to talk to them about the research and its implications to them as individual senior officers in government. These discussions were followed up with appropriate personalised letters to those key respondents namely, principals of three colleges, the permanent secretary for higher education, the

director in charge of colleges offering technical and vocational education and the three industrialists chairing the college advisory councils. I further requested my supervisor to write letters to the three principals and to the permanent secretary as shown in the appendices section of this report.

In my communication I emphasised the issue of ownership of the report by themselves and the benefits that could be realised thereafter. These two issues appeared attractive to them. Principals felt that their role had never been articulated adequately and were therefore waiting to talk to someone about their job and its settings. Much to my pleasant surprise, there was a sense of keenness from principals to get the final research report transmitted to head office. The permanent secretary was also eager to get a sense of what the situation was at college management level and to what extent these principals were coping with their job demands. To me, it was like coming to the scene for the first time since the growth of technical and vocational education after independence (1980). According to one principal:

I was never taught how to become of a head of department or a vice principal. There is no induction into how you become a principal yet ... and I operate under pressure from parents and the public who demand certain things.

This was said at the time of preparing the fieldwork, hence confirming one's desire to 'empty' one's feelings. The other principal stated:

I feel very isolated and lonely as principal. I think it is a stressful job ... do come and let's talk.

In response to my request for the interview and in support of the need for the report one principal stated:

... and I am hoping that with your research you will come up with recommendations that ministry will take seriously because I believe if it is someone different they tend to listen ... I hope anyway that you will be able to come up with something that will help our colleges ... because tech-voc is at the core.

These expressions were encouraging in terms of creating some recognition for the research and in removing any possible fears. I realised that I was talking to people who had been waiting for someone to talk to. I therefore felt that I could not afford to lose my closeness to the respondents and their confidence through my own negligence of ethical considerations hence, my continued reflection and communication, before and after the fieldwork investigation.

As a World Bank Technical Advisor based in Lesotho, I was conscious to adapt and adopt an equal-status approach so that my fieldwork would not be seen as any form of imposition or 'rule-based collaboration', but an honest, innocent and simply an academic exercise. As such, communication was based on mutual respect. Subsequently, we agreed that recorded interviews would be played back to them and all key respondents confirmed in writing that I could use their names in the research and also that I could go ahead and table the final report for discussion with their director and permanent secretary in head office.

### 3.9 Data Process

As I was carrying out the relevant preparatory work to collect and process data and realising that I was coming from an academic background of quantitative research, I decided to shift my research orientation to the qualitative paradigm and critically think as a qualitative researcher. My thinking was largely influenced by an intensive literature review coupled with a firm understanding of issues of research methodology following my attendance of a course on Research Methods organised by Rhodes University. I realised that what I was getting into was a completely new approach. Nonetheless, I felt encouraged by my supervisor's emphasis that there was no one correct methodological procedure; steps involving data process could be planned and organised in an open-ended manner thus, leaving room for unexpected changes, adaptation and revision.

At this crucial phase of preparing and deciding on the data process I found useful hints and guides as I read carefully those issues on qualitative research in various books and materials including Miles and Huberman (1984), Seidman (1991), Stake (1995), Kvale (1996) Van der Mescht's (1996) unpublished thesis and issues of the *Harvard Educational Review*.

I then proceeded to contact the interviewees, first by telephone and second, by a personalised letter asking if they would be prepared to be interviewed and confirming that they would also have no objection to my staying at the institution for three days in order to make observations and review documents. Interviews were carried out without informing them in advance as to the specific questions

although they knew the field of research and the goal of the research.

Themes emerging from the broad research questions were developed and from these, specific interview questions were formulated and targeted to specific respondents. Copies showing these in-depth interview questions are attached as appendices in this report.

Interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed in writing. During the transcription exercise, I decided to eliminate only those parts of their 'story telling' that I felt were not quite commensurate with the research topic or had no significance to the research. Otherwise attempts were made to reproduce the interview scripts as accurately as possible. Following the transcription, I listened again to the tapes while reading the transcript. I did this on the advice of Seidman (1991) and Kvale (1996) who state the importance of accuracy and picking on points of emphasis, mood, intonation and non-linguistic data which had been observed during interviews. These interviews, as explained earlier in this chapter, aimed at seeking deep and thorough understanding of social activities within the complex setting of governance and management. As Seidman (1991:11) states:

... we need to allow participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs.

The final stage was to analyse data, discuss and report the results. This part of the journey starts with clustering things with similar characteristics, things which go together and which do not. I tackled this exercise using a colour coding approach. Based on the

different clusters, themes emerged and topics for discussion were formulated from the themes.

On the basis of advice by Miles and Huberman (1984:228) I attempted to make connections and interrelationships of the interview responses, observation details and documentary sources. Out of these data, I made constructs which are developed into theories and compared with related theory. As such, I was able to develop conceptual and theoretical coherence of issues and discuss them in a logical framework. What emerged in this research is therefore a synthesis of the stories and experiences of participants, the meaning they make of that synthesis and how I respond as a researcher.

### 3.10 Data Presentation and Analysis

In any qualitative research featuring a case study, it is sometimes difficult to decide on who to include, who to leave out and who to pick on points of emphasis. This is because all participants do form a part of the research. Seidman (1991) and Kvale (1996) point out the need to carefully identify the key participants using one's 'hunches' or hypothesis based on the salient words describing the topic. Gilbert (1993:168) amplifies this process as the "provisional analysis".

In deciding on my key primary data source, the principals as heads of colleges became appropriate. In this study of governance and management of three technical colleges the perspectives of principals through interviews provide the primary source of data that is further cross-validated through triangulation of data emerging from

documentary sources and from my own observations of the case on the ground. According to various writers on principalship and college management (Bargh *et al.* 1996; Bush 1995; Charlton *et al.* 1995; Davies and Ellison 1997; Sergiovanni 1991) the person accountable to parents, outside community and authorities governing the institution for the smooth management of the institution, is the principal. In this research, the principal's interview responses provide the essential data from which issues emerge. As they emerge analytical discussion is built on themes constructed from the salient issues. The sequential analysis that follows highlights issues from documentary sources and observations as additional data.

As the analysis develops in the study, it moves from the micro-setting of management at the college level, to the macro-level of governance. At this point the industrialist who sits on the college's governing council enters the arena and head office which is the responsible authority also joins in. In Zimbabwe, reading from the Accounting Officers Instructions (1990) drafted and published by the government, it becomes evident that the principal occupies the most pivotal role in governance and management of technical colleges.

In the next three chapters that discuss the three case studies the sub-topics that are used emerge from the analytic themes obtained from the issues. The data are then critically analysed case by case with the main data issues coming from the responses of principals by supplemented with data from industrialists and head office from alternative explanations, thus avoiding a single viewpoint. The sequencing of discussion in the three cases is largely based on the scope of the data sources rather than on the methods. Accordingly, the discussion focus is on issues emerging from the analytic themes

constructed from the key responses of the key participants and triangulated with documentary sources and observations.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **CASE STUDY OF WESTGATE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE**

#### 4.1 Introduction

According to theorists Yin (1984) and Stake (1995) a case study is basically the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case and getting to understand its activity within essential circumstances, as discussed in chapter three. In this interpretative qualitative research, I shall attempt to emphasise feelings and attitudes of people, the wholeness of the individual key players in governance, and episodes of nuance and critical happenings in context, as discussed, documented and as I observed the situation.

In order to understand what is happening in this case study of Westgate Vocational Centre, it is appropriate to provide a contextual background covering an overview of the origins, purpose, mission and mandate of this technical and vocational institution in Zimbabwe. In this chapter therefore, Westgate will be examined in depth whilst developing an accurate description of the principal's management role and the overall governance system. This will ultimately contribute to the understanding of the holistic picture of relationships involving the principal, the industrialists and head office within the context of management and governance of technical and vocational education at Westgate. Through descriptive-dialogic processes, identification of themes that summarise the major concerns of key players throughout the research, analysing these themes, analysing documentary sources and making critical observations, it may be possible to build a deeper contextual

interpretation and understanding of Westgate. This, in my view, is one appropriate way that could provide a critical forum for suggesting ways of revitalising the management and governance system. In this chapter, I shall therefore attempt to focus actively on the problems themselves and try to build up the richest possible picture of the situation.

As Fullan (1993) cited in Garrett (1997: 106) warns:

We cannot develop effective responses to complex situations unless we actively seek and confront the real problems, which are in fact difficult to solve. Problems are our friends because it is only through immersing ourselves in problems that we can come up with creative solutions.

## 4.2 Background

Westgate Vocational Training Centre is a government technical institution situated some 5 kilometres west of Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe and established in the industrial sites near Ingwebu Breweries along Steeldale Road, off Ross Drive. Industrialists from the Motor Trade Association of Zimbabwe initiated the setting up of this vocational college. The intention of the association was to create a facility for re-training and continuous upgrade training of the semi-skilled labour force employed as motor mechanics, panel beaters and automotive electricians. According to documentary sources made available to the researcher, the vocational college had previously been a national railways primary school facility and a tripartite body of the National Industrial Council of the Motor Trade Association had negotiated the acquisition of the school for further developing it into a vocational college between

1978 and 1980 . In 1983, three years after Zimbabwe's independence, the centre was handed over to the government, at that time, to the Ministry of Manpower Planning and Development before the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology.

With the signing of the French-Zimbabwe Protocol Agreement in 1983, facilities were improved and expanded by a French Industrial Council, namely MECAFORM. The reconstruction included relatively modern workshops, classroom blocks, electrical laboratories, an audio-video centre, an administrative block, hostels, two senior staff houses, a kitchen and a dining hall.

A closer examination of the French-Zimbabwe Protocol Agreement indicated that the Zimbabwean government would provide funding for construction of the buildings whilst the French would provide all the equipment, oversee the installation, as well as supervise the construction of the buildings through a senior French expert. The said expert would also train the local principal in the basics of organising engineering courses, planning intakes, recruiting staff and maintenance of equipment and machinery using manuals translated from French to English. These developments resulted in the official launch of the vocational college by the President of Zimbabwe at the beginning of 1984.

An extract from the speech read by President R.G. Mugabe at the official launch (Feb. 1984) of the institution highlighted the main thrust of the college as that of offering three types of technical and vocational courses, namely Automotive Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, using the following modes of training:

- college-based training for apprentices from within the southern part of the country, who had gained industrial on-job training and experience but lacked the relevant theoretical grounding;
- direct training of “O” level school leavers wishing to follow various engineering courses in order to be employed as career artisans and technicians;
- up-grade training for industrially based people with practical experience but lacking theoretical knowledge that would facilitate upward mobility in their occupations, to skilled worker status;
- specialist part-time training for the informal sector or as requested from time to time by employers, government organisations and non-governmental bodies.

### MISSION STATEMENT

As I entered the reception areas of Westgate Vocational College on 6 July 1998, my eyes were caught by a Mission Statement clearly printed on a large piece of paper as follows:

The Mission Statement of Westgate Vocational Training Centre is to provide systematic skills upgrading and increased utilisation of the technologies, in order to improve industrial productivity and the quality of life in our society.

The impression I got was that in keeping with modern trends in learning organisations, a mission statement is not only desirable but

should be properly framed and displayed in the front office of the organisation. Dalin (1998) has suggested that an effective mission statement should be market-oriented, feasible, motivating and specific, and added that it should be a summary of the shared vision conceived by management. In this regard I observed that whilst the stated mission statement of Westgate captures the element of 'upgrade training' which implies improving and building on skills already acquired, it does not seem to capture or highlight the element and essence of providing new skills, knowledge and attitudes to school leavers who need to be trained for various engineering occupations necessary for their survival or for the world of work.

The capacity distribution of students for 1998 stood as follows:

a) Students on full-time courses and training to the National Certificate Level over a period of 1 year.

Automotive Mechanics	69
Electricians	33
Mechanical (Fitting/Turning/Fabrication)	36
Radio and TV Electronics	<u>12</u>
Total	<u>150</u>

b) Trainees undergoing up-grade Training (on 8 weeks Block Release Basis)

Automotive	109
Electrical (heavy current)	81
Mechanical Engineering	<u>146</u>
Total	<u>336</u>

c) Part-time Sandwich Courses (offered on Saturdays only).

Automotive	304
Electrical	355
Mechanical	438
Construction	72
Printing	<u>36</u>
Total	<u>1180</u>

### Capacity

An analysis of the data distribution of the enrolment capacity shows that the institution is serving specified target populations like school leavers, employees seeking further training or upgrade training to improve on their skills proficiency levels. Minutes of a meeting held on 25 February 1998 between the college management staff and the college advisory council indicated some concern that there were staff shortages in some areas hence the centre was operating below capacity by between 30 to 40%.

Questioned about this under-utilisation of the technical and vocation system as a result of staff shortages, the acting director of manpower planning and development in the ministry's head office responsible for this centre (August 1998) had this comment to make:

Staff shortages have been attributed to a number of factors including staff appointments requirements, recruitment procedures, and conditions of service when in fact the vocational training system depends on professionals whose qualifications and experience are also needed in industry and commerce. There is therefore a

perpetual tussle over these institutions between the public and the private sectors. The ultimate loser is the government vocational training system.

Having looked at the background of Westgate Vocational Training Centre, I now briefly relate it to the management and governance as provided through documentary sources, before analysing and interpreting interview discussions with the people within the arena of management and governance.

#### 4.3 Nature of Governance and Management

The N.E.P.I. (1992: 36) report suggests that “changes in the system of education are heavily influenced by the existing structures of governance”. This necessitates systematic and historical analyses of the existing governance system in order to identify the opportunities for and constraints on change.

In the case of Westgate, a key document on governance in the form of a Manpower Planning and Development Act, Number 24 of 1994, read in conjunction with revisions made in 1996 and contained in Chapter 28: 02 of the same Act, shows that the legal framework, the financial and accreditation control of the vocational training system at Westgate, are key issues vested in the “responsible authority”. In the words of this Act Number 24, Part I, Paragraph 2 the words “responsible authority” in relation to any college or institution means “the person responsible for the establishment and management of the college or institution”. The said Act however, is silent about the powers and the role of the principal but rather highlights under Paragraph 4 of Part II that “the minister shall as the authority,

exercise his/her power under this Act to promote the following objectives”:

- establishment and development of institutions devoted to the production of qualified professional manpower; and
- co-ordination and standardisation of technical or vocational education; and
- control and standardisation of professional qualifications; other than degrees awarded by a university; and
- provision of a comprehensive and constantly developing service for teacher education, technical or vocational institutions and for technical or vocational education.

The principal, the director in head office and the permanent secretary for the ministry, are all working on behalf of the minister. This notion is further explained in a separate piece of legislation defined as the Audit and Exchequer Act, Chapter 168. Unlike the Manpower Act, the Audit and Exchequer Act covers all financial matters including the purchase, control and utilisation of assets and all income and expenditure at the college.

My analysis shows that the Audit and Exchequer Act places accountability in the hands of the Permanent Secretary defined as the “accounting officer” even for issues that take place at the college where the principal is defined as the “sub-accounting officer” acting on behalf of the permanent secretary.

As I further examined other legal instruments and policy papers that govern the management of technical and vocational colleges, it became clear to me that the permanent secretary has responsibility



*inter alia* for hiring lecturers and instructors for Westgate, payment of salaries and approval of the employment of supportive staff. Although these ancillary staff may be hired directly between Westgate and the department of labour and employment, the final appointment lies with head office in consultation with the Public Service Commission.

According to Davies and Ellison (1997) if the head of a learning organisation has limited power in staffing the institution, this may create problems for him in re-organising the institution, forming teams and building high performance teamwork. The case of Westgate is not too far from this scenario, given this documentary analysis.

The Manpower Planning and Development Act Number 24 of 1994 makes the necessary provisions for college principals to link their institutions with industry through the establishment of college advisory councils.

In terms of the Act under discussion, these councils have a major role of advising the institution on all curricular issues, and in general management of the institution for external efficiency. In the case of Westgate, minutes of meetings showed that an active college advisory council is in place. Membership to the council is by recommendation of the principal to the minister on the basis of relevant expertise in the areas being taught at the college, coupled with a high level of influence and clout within the industrial community. The chairperson is an industrialist elected by the council members.

A typical situation that I noted is that, because Westgate is running courses in panel-beating and electrical engineering, a famous industrialist who is himself a qualified panel-beater was approached and appointed as a council member and an electrical engineer also sits in the Westgate College Advisory Council. According to the Act governing technical and vocational education (Act Number 24 of 1994) the principal and his/her heads of departments are *ex-officio* members of the council. Below the college advisory council, there are departmental advisory committees chaired by heads of departments and consisting of co-opted professional practitioners, employers appointed by the college advisory council and college staff in the department. These committees also advise on college programmes and curriculum review, but at the operational level. My analysis of the conception of college advisory councils and their committees is that these are mechanisms that have been devised to ensure quality and relevance of technical and vocational programmes. The principal of Westgate can therefore use these mechanisms for maintaining external efficiency of the system under management. Regarding the frequency of meetings, the Act states that the college advisory council and its committees must meet “regularly”. The onus for calling meetings lies with the principal.

Having interacted with legal documents and policy papers on governance and management of Westgate, I can now illuminate briefly the profile of the principal before noting patterns and themes that summarise his/her key concerns and issues associated with the governance and management of Westgate.

#### 4.4 Brief Profile of the Principal

Minutes of the College Advisory Council held on 25 February 1998 (paragraph two) highlight the introduction of the new principal as Mr Stephen Raza. This was done by the outgoing principal Mr Zenzo Nyoni. The principal Mr Raza appears to be a relatively young man in his early forties judging from the time during which he attended both secondary and tertiary education. He indicated that he had an engineering degree from a Canadian University. Westgate was his first appointment to the principalship position. From being a trainee motor mechanic, Mr Raza had worked his way up to become a qualified motor vehicle technician and eventually, an automotive engineering lecturer at Harare Polytechnic. He then rose through the ranks to become a lecturer-in-charge and subsequently the head of the Automotive Division. On his upward career mobility in technical and vocational education, Mr Raza stated:

Whilst I was lecturing, I continued to work hard in my job and at the same time further my studies through part-time programmes up to the highest automotive diploma awarded through the Institute of Motor Industry. It was at that point that my ministry working on recommendations from my principal nominated me for sponsorship to Canada for further university education in engineering.

From our discussion, it was clear that the principal had not done any further formal training in educational management but rather in industrial supervision as a component of the engineering degree programme. Asked how he had become principal of Westgate, Mr Raza stated:

I became principal of Westgate after an advert had been put in the paper for the job. I applied for the post and went for an interview. At the interview, I must have, I think, impressed the interview panel

at head office so they chose me to become the Principal of Westgate.

As Principal of Westgate, a learning organisation with a hierarchical command structure, Mr Raza is sitting at the 'top of the organisation'. According to Sergiovanni (1991), he is officially responsible for the efficient management, culture and discipline of the institution.

In this scenario, one of my concerns in this chapter is to get an interpretation of the principal's understanding of his/her management role. This will be done from the perspective of the job demands of principalship, problems and relationships with major key stakeholders involved in technical and vocational education at Westgate. This view point is supported by Roe and Drake (1980:11) who suggest:

It isn't enough to make a functional study of the principal's present activities as has been done so many times before. What is needed now (in this era) is an honest appraisal of the principal's role primarily as manager and administrator of people and things.

#### 4.5 Analysis of the Principal's Interview Responses

In this section, I present and discuss the responses of the principal to the broad semi-structured questions regarding his role and his holistic management job within the context of governance of the college. Insights into the significant problems associated with the demands of his job are analysed using the theoretical perspectives of management and governance practices in technical and vocational

education. The discussion will draw on the themes emerging from the responses.

#### 4.5.1 Setting an Entrepreneurial Role

Asked to explain his understanding of his role as principal of Westgate and what it means to be one, Mr Raza stated:

I am an organiser, a leader, a manager. I plan and run courses. I am involved in curriculum development, supervising examinations, ordering and preparing budgets, ordering equipment for the college and planning new programmes. I plan, manage and supervise through my heads of departments. Nowadays we want to go beyond looking at traditional things such as looking after staff and students accommodation ...etc. I believe institutions should change. There should now be institutional entrepreneurship. That means institutions should now be self-supportive in a way instead of just waiting for handouts from government ... with the economic situation changing the government cannot support every establishment.

Mr Raza realises that his role is complex and is operating in a dynamic environment. He alludes to the fact that he is managing change. In the process of managing change, Smit and Cronje (1992) have pointed out that the principal of a school plays three major roles, namely: interpersonal, decision-making and information role.

In the case of Westgate, the principal goes beyond these roles and sees himself occupying an entrepreneurial role. In his words:

We are thinking of getting materials, manufacturing items that can actually be sold by the same students so that then you know the

training is meaningful. Originally we were saying there are companies out there, they need manpower, that's what we are training for. But if you look at the Zimbabwean scenario we find that it's not all companies that are growing. Most companies are phasing out ... but we still need to build manpower, so where do we put these graduates?

It is clear that the principal's expectations are aimed at giving appropriate skills so that graduates are able to set up their own enterprises. He seems to have created a new vision bent on the idea of entrepreneurial training as a significant integrated component of the teaching and learning process. According to him, such an approach will equip graduates from Westgate with the necessary survival skills. The principal's thinking appears to be drawn from what he describes as his strategic plan, which borrows from his stated desire to look at the wider aspects of inputs, processes and outputs of a college as a social system.

His vision emerges from his conviction that technical and vocational colleges should be accountable to the labour market in general and to the industrial economy in particular. He further added:

We don't want to appear to be like secondary school institutions where people are interested in giving the guy a certificate and what happens after that is his own business.

The emphasis on entrepreneurial skills development by the principal is quite vivid. His desire is to bring relevant production systems into the training programme as part of an integrated curriculum enrichment programme. As he put it:

The recipients of these programmes will be able to create employment for themselves by establishing small industries from where they can make usable items for sale or carry out competitive services such as motor vehicle repairs or panel-beating for their survival or enter the labour market without any problems of performance.

Rosemary Stewart (1982) quoted in Sergiovanni (1991:25) describes managerial jobs in colleges “as consisting of an inner core of demands, an outer boundary of constraints and an in-between area of choices”. Demands are determined by policy, legal requirements etc., whereas constraints are determined by the norms and values that exist in the environment outside such as political realities, community beliefs or industrial expectations. In this case, the principal of Westgate is not ignoring possible constraints of the unemployed skilled workers coming from his college.

In the final analysis, it may be possible that the unemployed skilled workers could threaten the principal's job and the continued existence of the college. This could appear far-fetched but my assertion is that Mr Raza appears to understand his role in terms of the implications of his decisions in strategic planning, his perception and knowledge of the job and his expected behaviour. Hoy and Miskel (1991:37) would fit Mr Raza into what they describe as a “manager with cognition or cognitive understanding of his role”. His personal beliefs in entrepreneurial training appear to be a major base in constructing his organisational goals and reality, in the interpretation of his role.

To me, it is clear that the principal, as an individual manager is not satisfied with just the “taken for granted” functions of his job such as supervising staff, budgeting and looking after students as

contained in his job description, as quoted in chapter two. In the interpretation of his role, it seems that the principal is accepting responsibility for everything that happens in the college, to his students and beyond. He is essentially accepting accountability to the labour market demands. As confirmed by his own words, he is keen to play a significant role in shaping the lives of students beyond the “traditional things” to the more challenging role of “producing job creators” for the “outside” changing world of work.

#### 4.5.2 Managing Internal Operations

The principal of Westgate organises and chairs regular internal meetings and committees. There are academic board meetings involving lecturing staff and through these meetings, matters relating to curriculum reviews, timetabling of courses, lesson plans and teaching methodologies are discussed. Matters of general administrative nature are also discussed separately in administrative meetings involving heads of sections and departments. Such meetings involve issues affecting the internal efficiency of the college.

Representatives of students are invited to meetings and committees if items on the agenda involve the welfare of students. Schedules of the various meetings and committees were shown to me by the registrar (administrative officer) of the institution.

In sharing with me his experiences on how he handles problems and concerns of his management job, Mr Raza was quick to point out issues of theft. To put it in his own words:



One of the biggest problems that Westgate was facing was theft of teaching materials, equipment and small engineering tools. When I came to Westgate, I found out that there were serious control and security problems. I found I could drive in and out without being searched at the gate. In workshops students and staff could just use equipment and tools from the storeman but nobody was accountable for losses.

Having observed these problems, the principal introduced control mechanisms at the college gate. In workshops, students and lecturers were required to sign for any items that they withdrew or borrowed from the stores and a tag bearing the corresponding number of the borrower and the item was placed at the place where the item is normally kept. A 'card withdrawal system' was introduced by the principal, in cases where tags were not employed. Follow-up procedures to missing items were introduced. In cases where follow-ups were not possible the whole group was made accountable. The group would therefore be responsible for replacing the lost or stolen item through some fining system.

As the principal employed innovative control systems in the business of the college, staff and students have seen changes in what Holmes (1993:111) defines as "professional accountability", to oneself and to colleagues. The principal's argument in the imposition of professional accountability is based on the premise that everyone at every level has a stake in the effectiveness of the college. Also the principal maintains that the college is a learning environment where accountability, change of behaviour and working together, should be enforced as "dominant features" of an effective college.

In addition to this sense of "responsibility and accountability", the principal seems to be creating a sense of 'business ethics' which ,

according to Middleton *et al.* (1993) is crucial in technical and vocational education where you are preparing a person for the world of work. Given this scenario, I further proceeded to ask two independent groups of engineering students who were engaged in their practical training activities how they viewed management's standpoint on controls and accountability. The students considered management's approach as part of what was "expected in a good college". When asked to elaborate, they (students) made reference to a "good college system" of management by stating: "Well he is preparing us for our future ... it is important ... he (principal) treats us with mutual respect". There is no divergence in perceptions between the two separate groups. What appears to emerge is, according to Bottery (1992:121) "substantial rationality" where people are encouraged to develop not only a facility for conforming to directives, but also a "talent" for evaluating the appropriateness of those actions and acting accordingly. Unlike bureaucratic rationality which is mechanical, substantial rationality tends to be reflective and self-organising.

#### 4.5.3 Participatory Approach to Management

At Westgate, there is a general desire by the principal to be more proactive and employ participatory approaches in his decision-making role.

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, the principal believes in committees and meetings and makes use of them in his management practice. He has taken the initiative to institute some of the committees. According to him:

I have only the finance committee which I found in operation but I have established a functions committee, a production committee, a sports committee and many other committees.

Asked what these committees do, the principal indicated that the Finance Committee meets on a monthly basis to supervise all the financial matters of the college such as income and expenditure as well as decisions on the release of funds for purchases, special functions and special projects. The Functions Committee organises significant occasions such as open days, graduation ceremonies, prize-giving days and special functions for staff occasions. The Production Committee, in his own words:

... is basically for supervising the production system taking place in all engineering workshops. The idea is to create as much income as possible and beef up the Amenities Fund through the production and marketing of usable items in demand such as display cabinets, steel gates, window frames, door frames or repair television sets and radios as part of training.

From my interview discussion and my reading of the situation, it is evident that the management practice at Westgate is commensurate in a number of ways with the structural perspective theory discussed in Chapter Two. According to various theorists (Fullan 1993, Davies and Ellison 1997, Garrett 1997) a principal operating within the structural perspective attempts to develop a management role that serves as a bridge for synergy not only between the college and its environment but between the different sub-systems in the college. This is with a view to ensure efficiency, collective wisdom and optimal use of resources.

This structural perspective is further confirmed by the principal's description of how he manages information. He addresses students regularly and updates them on the college's expectations. According to him, it is essential to keep reminding both students and staff about why they are at Westgate. He commented:

I say to them (students) what are we here for? If the students say to learn, I then say, that's your core business. Everything else is secondary, in case they think they came for a holiday. I must constantly remind them of that.

In handling information, the principal is cautious that policy circulars from the head office, information bulletins and memos are distributed, conveyed or displayed on notice boards expeditiously. The principal moves around in the college, as observed by me and as further confirmed by his staff. He does this to check on what has been put on the notice boards by the registry staff and by heads of departments and students. Notification of meetings and special messages such as condolences or sporting activities are displayed. Management of information is, according to Sergiovanni (1991) critical in controlling events or probabilities. Mintzberg (1989) supports this notion on the basis that it increases reliability and predictability of events and core activities of the organisation by knowing what is taking place.

I maintain that modern learning organisations have become too complex to run without organised committees. It is also likely that people will support decisions much more enthusiastically if they have had a say or have been involved in making those decisions.

This view is also supported by Sergiovanni (1991:60) who suggests that the whole process of involving people in committees on a systematic basis means that their various individual inputs result in an output that is truly synergic, in that the outcome is greater in achievement than the mere totalling of the individual inputs. In managing the college, the use of 'synergy' appears to be an essential component of Mr Raza's management practice. In a situation of this nature, power does not seem to be concentrated in the principal's hands but rather it is spread out through active participation of staff and students in the various committees and meetings. This could suggest that the principal of Westgate is accessible to his staff, to some extent.

#### 4.5.4 Setting a Culture of Communicating and Problem-Solving

Staff and students commented on the mutual respect and mutual caring between management and students and between management and staff. College regulations are in place but there is intensive consultation and dialogue, in the formative stages of drafting these regulations. According to the principal:

We make regulations sitting together collectively, the registrar, senior members of staff, heads of departments and relevant administrative staff (co-opted from the section concerned). But these are meant to guide everyone in the system rather than impose strict discipline on students.

The college does not have a formally structured students representative council (SRC) as such. Communication between the principal and the students is done frequently but on an ad hoc basis through regular meetings between the principal and class representatives chosen by students.

When I asked students about the importance and purpose of these ad hoc meetings, this is what they had to say:

When there are changes made to our dietary provisions, management calls us and discusses with us the budget ... the costing and the effect of price increases on our diet.

Norms and values of an open climate across the entire college are reflected in the manner in which people greet you and smile at you. It is a mixture of high morale, candidness and a fast business-like approach.

The increasing value placed on work performance of staff and goal-orientation of students emphasises how staff and students use their time and also on how communication flows in the college. Mr Raz commented:

I believe in talking and interaction and if we face each other face to face and give the facts as they are then we should be okay. I think it helps. Students should develop a culture of problem-solving rather than going to the streets (for demonstrations) without finding ways and means of solving problems. So we encourage talking.

Westgate has a certain culture of its own. I was informed that since its inception, the students had never gone on any strike action or class boycott. There is noticeably high morale amongst staff and students. According to Vecchio and Smith (1997) cited in Vecchio (1997:485) if responses to management systems have been accepted because they have met with success over time, a certain culture

emerges. Those habits and routines of 'how business gets done around here' are reflected within a culture of horizontal and vertical communication as the lifeblood of Westgate. In this dynamic situation, problem-solving is viewed in a positive sense as a challenge rather than an issue.

Mr Raza's management approach at the college tends to orient attention towards "important" issues of learning in a climate of communication and reinforcement of expected behaviour and expected outcomes.

Basson *et al.* (1991) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991:649) wrote about the crucial role of the principal in creating a work-oriented organisational climate in which personnel are happily involved in developing both their goals and those of the organisation. To me, the general feeling of high morale at Westgate could be a source of personal satisfaction to both students and staff in the attainment of their goals. This assertion is supported by Selznick (1957) cited in Vecchio (1997:489) who argues that over time social structures develop and a culture is established. This culture is likely to become valued for its own sake, "since the organisation becomes an institutional fulfilment of group integrity and aspiration". It is evident that the management at Westgate is creating a mixed culture of learning in a business-like fashion with a culture of communication and problem-solving in an atmosphere of mutual respect of one another.

Even in this scenario, the principal appears to be driven by a combination of both an industrial-business-like approach and an African management approach. The former coincides with the traditional 'western' efficiency approach to management, while the

latter corresponds with the theory of “*ubuntu* spirit” propounded by Mbigi and Maree (1995: 8-9) whose approach to management is characterised by the desire for communication, collective vision, concern for harmony and the use of solidarity spirit in achieving set goals. According to this notion, the “spirit of *ubuntu*” should make it possible to build co-operation and competitive strategies by allowing teamwork to permeate in the organisation. Management approaches at Westgate appear to be moving along those two dimensions.

Mr Raza’s principalship could be an example of what Van der Westhuizen (1991:631) suggested could create an organisational climate which makes it difficult or sometime unnecessary for hostile informal groups emerging or strike action erupting. I tend to support this notion on the premise that it is, in any case, the college principal who is the person in authority and is therefore central to the entire activity of setting the culture of the college.

#### 4.5.5 Managing Relationships with Industry

The relationship between Westgate and the private industrial sector poses a big challenge for the principal who has to maintain a delicate balance in a “give-and-take” situation, within the overall governance of Westgate.

The skills requirements and occupational performance standards in the Bulawayo industrial region are crucial issues that the principal must address, among other things. The Principal also relies on co-operation with industry for the organisation of industrial attachments for trainees, who have to cover both college based education and practical on-job training in industry. Mr Raza is



aware of the need for maintaining this delicate relationship. According to him:

We have a close relationship with industry and we always try to maintain it that way. We realise that most of our graduates are consumed by industry and it's only fair that industry has an input on curriculum issues, welfare of students and everything else that students go through at college.

Documentary sources made available to me indicate that between January 1998 and August 1998, four meetings had taken place between the college management led by the principal and the college advisory council representing the industrial private sector.

Although the regulations contained in the Manpower Planning Development Act Number 24 of 1994 make provisions for at least three meetings per year, Westgate and its industrial advisory council have agreed to six meetings per year. If the need arises for an industrial consultation, the principal calls the chairman for a meeting. In Mr Raza's opinion:

I think we are moving in the right direction. I feel that our relationship is good. I tell them (members of the college advisory council) what I expect of them and they tell me what they expect of the college.

The management of relationships with industry is an important concern of any principal of a technical or vocational college. If the relationship is managed well, it should, according to Roe and Drake (1980:35), lead to greater organisational effectiveness and efficiency. In chapter two of this research study, an attempt was made to draw a line of distinction between effectiveness and efficiency as

contextualised in an educational organisation. Whereas effectiveness is essentially the ability of the college to meet its set goals, efficiency on the other hand relates to cost savings or proper use of resources that accompany the attainment of set goals. For Westgate, the position advanced by the principal is that the meetings between the college management and the college advisory council, including the council's departmental advisory committees, are essentially to "monitor both effectiveness and efficiency" of the college rather than focusing on curriculum relevance only, as defined in the Act 24.

Various theorists support the notion that if the relationship is not managed well, goals may not be efficiently realised despite the will to do so by the principal. According to Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999) poor relationships could result from role ambiguity. This could arise from the discrepancy between an understanding of task related information such as terms of reference for the college advisory council by the council members themselves and the principal's interpretation of the role of the same council. Edwards and Carroll (1984:135) cited in the 1984 Yearbook of the American Vocational Association, support the fundamental need "for co-operation geared towards the maintenance and improvement of the relationship between college management and the college advisory council".

The two theorists argue that this is only feasible if there is trust and effective mutual communication between the two systems. To me, Mr Raza considers himself and the college advisory council very much as part of the management team of Westgate. The principal is therefore bringing into management that element of trust and communication that is necessary with employers and the private sector.

#### 4.5.6 Managing a Problematic Relationship with Head Office

The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology through the offices of the Director of Manpower Planning and Development and the Permanent Secretary, control the actions of technical and vocational colleges. This is done at the national level through policy formulation, policy enactment and its dissemination from head office to the college, whilst at the college level the principal is expected to ensure its enforcement and its implementation. In the context of this study, policy is viewed in terms of what Sergiovan ni *et al.* (1999:217) defined as the “authoritative communication of expected behaviour” for college principals, staff and students under specified conditions. The two senior officials in head office ( permanent secretary and director) do have the power to influence policy, make policy and impose sanctions whereas the principal’s duty it to ensure that policy is complied with and enforced at Westgate.

According to the principal, the “relationship with head office is problematic” and “at times policy creates serious bureaucratic delays”. Mr Raza further comments:

From my own point of view, head office should wholly empower us principals to govern, look after and manage our own colleges. Most decisions should be made at the college level and policies should only be in the form of guidelines rather than channelling business to head office.

It was evident from the tone of the discussion that the principal was not happy with the relationship between college management and head office particularly with regard to the imposition of policy. He indicated that policy requires him to channel most of the college

management business to head office which will then channel the same business to Public Service Commission, then further channel some of that business to the Salary Service Bureau and then to Treasury (in the Ministry of Finance) then back to Public Service Commission, back to head office and finally back to the college. That, according to Mr Raza, "was creating unnecessary delays in processing issues if documentation has to go through four stages" before being actioned. He further describes the problem in his own words:

It turns nasty if you want to appoint a person such as a lecturer or a typist and you need work to go on. But if you have to get permission to get a part-time person it is again frustrating. As principal you know the value of a typist ... you can't have things drag for months and months while work is piling. You need authority from head office to hire a typist and that process of getting authority takes months and after that authority you interview someone, again it takes months and months before you are informed whether that person is to be hired or not.

Another problem indicated by the principal relates to the college manpower establishment. The number of positions for the college staffing were made some ten years ago and therefore the manpower establishment no longer corresponds with the existing demands of the college due to issues of expansion and other change or growth factors. The principal comments on his frustrations:

We are stuck ... we are really understaffed ...but on the ground you need staff so it becomes a headache. Ministry has to verify and decide whether you really want staff despite your justification. It then sends its decision to the Public Service Commission who will send their

own decision to the Ministry of Finance for verifying if there could be funds for salaries or not. At the end you receive a lot of explanations.

It is true from my observation of the manpower utilisation and my analysis of the organisational structure that Westgate is critically understaffed. For example, the accounts clerk is operating as the registry clerk and also as the examinations clerk. These are three separate positions that should be occupied by three people. When asked how the officer was coping with the work load, his comment was: "There is a big problem so the thing is we just try to give the best we can with the best we have". Despite the overload of work, the members of staff did not show any visible signs of low morale or demotivation. On the contrary most of those whom I interacted with, spoke in positive terms about their college management practices. That being the case there appears to be a realisation that the problem of understaffing at the college is not a creation of the college but has to do with policy issues (from head office) affecting the bureaucratic processes.

In spite of all this, policy issues which affect students but originated from head office, are discussed intensively by the principal and students. The principal in this situation appears to be 'absorbing all the pressures' emerging from head office and tries to insulate students and staff from these 'policy pressures' and bureaucratic impediments.

According to him:

There are times when students complain and I say to them my door is open, come and interact with me so that I can explain issues. My message is to encourage them to be proactive but if the issues are beyond us (college management and

students), we just remind ourselves about our core business, ... receive training and learn.

Another issue causing relationship problems between the college principal and head office is to do with financial resources. According to the principal, it is always difficult to strike a balance between the task demands of Westgate with the funds available to the college by head office. The college management prepares financial estimates of expenditure but often (every year) what the college gets in turn does not compare to the estimates carefully prepared and requested.

Given this scenario, the principal thinks that the problem is not insurmountable. This is what he feels:

I don't expect to get everything that I need. I am saying as a college we must try on our own to create some supplementary funds. This is why we are setting other projects through our established production unit. So we are manufacturing items as part of training and selling them to the outside community for extra funds, so that if a department is running short of funds, we can say pick up from Amenities Fund so as to balance our finances.

It seems to me that the principal's style of managing complex relationships is commensurate with what Drucker (1977: 198) called "managing with the power of positive thinking". This is further confirmed by the principal's own words: "The conditions that we are in, I am always ready to go and I am sure ... I will succeed". Mr Raza could be described as what Taylor and Hill cited in Harris *et al.* (1997: 166) have described as a "visionary manager bent on total quality management involving every department, every activity and every person". Besides having his "do or open" as he insists, I infer that Mr Raza has an 'open mind'.

The principal appears to have recognised the legitimate right of head office to exercise power on policy issues. Such a situation creates what Sergiovanni *et al.* (1987:111) called “formal authority relationship”, in which the subordinate “suspends critical judgment” as to the merit of the superordinate’s request. In this case, the principal’s “power of positive thinking” in saying, “I am always ready to go” draws to some extent on formal authority relationships as propounded by Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999) despite the fact that he may not necessarily agree with head office’s stated policy.

Rather than the principal becoming what Roe and Drake (1998:281) described as a “management mechanic” of head office due to its strong position of power and influence, Mr Raza’s “open door” policy and his expertise in managing change, his participatory approach and his mutual relationships with staff, students and industrialists, are creating a unified community. This appears to be the principal’s greatest source of satisfaction and inspiration in managing Westgate amidst a problematic relationship with head office.

Inevitably, a principal’s managerial work must accommodate policy realities of governance if his actions and activities are to be successful. His/her management job is a dynamic occupation involving communicating almost throughout the day, investigating areas of potential trouble and conducting meetings with both insiders and outsiders.

As such Hanson (1985) points out that the management work of principals is more accurately characterised by their actions and not their behaviour. These “better actions”, “better processes” and “better means” are according to Sergiovanni (1991:13) immersed in

values, ideas, aspirations and hopes of the principal. Mr Raza's management of his relationship with head office thus seems to follow the lines and advice of "ubuntu" as described in Mbigi and Maree (1995). This requires him to concentrate energy and effort in building co-operation, teamwork, solidarity and mutual respect among the subordinates as a strong transformational force for shifting attention and perceptions from problematic issues to challenges facing the organisation.

#### 4.6 Analysis of the Industrialist's Interview Responses

This section will feature the themes and explanations made by the chairperson of Westgate's College Advisory Council, Mr R.T. Wright, managing director of Topcraft Panel Beaters in Bulawayo and also chairman of the Motor Trade Industry Association for Matebeleland (Bulawayo region). He has been the chairperson of Westgate advisory council since its inception in 1995 and continues to be voted into the position every year. Mr Wright will explain issues of the relationship between Westgate and the industrial private sector, in his official capacity as representing the wider industrialists or stakeholders of technical and vocational education in the Bulawayo region, who interact and network with Westgate or employ its graduates. Comparisons will be drawn using repeated themes. Significant issues are clustered, as patterns emerge. These issues will be discussed and analysed using theoretical perspectives arising from a review of the related theoretical framework.

##### 4.6.1 Advising the College through Interaction

Mr Wright believes that Westgate is sufficiently preparing students for the labour market demands and therefore carrying out "its role



appropriately". The industrialist confirmed the usefulness and frequency of meetings between college management and the college advisory council as previously indicated by the principal.

Concern was expressed at the manner in which head office deals with issues of collaboration between industrialists and the college. According to Mr Wright, the college advisory council was only set up in 1995 although the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology had given a directive to the college to establish an advisory council in 1984. Mr Wright comments:

We submitted our CVs and were told to re-submit since head office had misplaced them. We therefore lost a lot of time between 1984 and 1995 but otherwise we are putting a lot of useful information to the relevant authorities.

Mr Wright feels that together with college management, they are working as a team and "putting the college on the map" through jointly organised open days and through "intensive publicity" of their programmes in both the national and the local media.

The chairperson of the council is particularly pleased with the introduction of new courses in radio and television repairs whose graduates are, according to him, "in great demand throughout the region". He emphasised the importance of a mutual relationship between the industrial private sector and the college. He indicates:

at our last meeting we again emphasised the need for Westgate to interact with commerce and industry. We must train people to their (commerce and industry) satisfaction. There is no purpose in training people in courses and levels that are not needed by industry.

What appears to be contentious is the relationship or liaison between the ministry's head office and the industrial sector represented by the college advisory council. There is a feeling among council members that their advice does not reach head office. In the college advisory council there is no representative member from the National Manpower Advisory Council, (NAMACO) a national body that advises the permanent secretary and the minister, even if the Act Number 24 of 1994 makes provision for this. In his own words, Mr Wright comments:

We are not advised of what their (head office ) requirements are for us to try and organise this college. We have put forward our suggestions to head office through NAMACO for new courses to be introduced ... but we don't get any feedback. Our contact is with the college.

It seems that at some point there is a problem of communication. On one hand the principal does not transmit suggestions from his council to head office. On the other hand, there is no representative member from NAMACO, nominated to sit in the college council. In this case the ministry does not really know what is happening on the ground but the college council knows. According to Mr Wright, the college council is delighted to "go around the college on a regular basis" and inspect the teaching and learning process before the start of its meetings with college management. In doing so, the council has discovered that most departments are under-funded. Funds being provided by head office are inadequate to effectively finance the entire teaching and learning processes. This has far reaching implications in producing fully competent skilled workers as some of the curriculum components are not being addressed through practical lessons.

These workshop processes and lessons draw heavily on the budget for consumables such as oils and petrol for testing engines, gas for welding operations, steel rods for use on lathe machines and drawing paper for engineering drawing exercises. What is more disturbing to the college council are sudden cuts on transport usage and serious budgetary cuts imposed by head office from time to time.

Mr Wright comments:

As a council we have a lot in the dark of what's happening between head office and the college ... we are not advised. We hear that they want to privatise or ... is it commercialise certain functions of the college? When we ask the principal, he is not quite sure. I feel there is something lacking from the ministry ... there should be a better link with the college advisory council.

In our interview discussion, Mr Wright went further to express his disappointment at the removal of the former principal in December and the "sudden appointment" of the new principal in January without being advised about what was going on. In his own words: "We were not advised, we just heard stories ... I thought I should have been advised". In spite of these problematic relationships and communication barriers between the College Council and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, the Westgate advisory council is quite happy with the way the college is being managed by the new principal.

The situation as I see it, is that there is a college advisory council sitting at the college level and there is yet another "bigger" national advisory council focusing on advising head office but between the

two, there is no practical linkage, no firm networking and no effective communication.

It is evident to me that Westgate and the local industry are mutually dependent. According to Kiggundu (1986) a critical issue in addressing contributions for organisational effectiveness should be the focus on stakeholders' participation in strategic management.

In the case of Westgate, industry through the college advisory council is demonstrating an interest or ownership of some stake in what the college is doing through protracted discussion, complex interactions and on-going routine meetings with management. Head office should perhaps take Hanson's (1995) advice of responding to external pressures of illuminative evaluation and reflective practices before internal problems build their own internal pressure.

According to my analysis of the relationship, the college advisory council is doing its best at what Van der Westhuizen (1991:442) describes as "making an effort to provide a true and complete picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the college", as a way of helping the college improve its effectiveness. This is largely possible if there is a healthy college-industry relationship. Once shaped and established, such relationships should not be disturbed by head offices through what Holmes (1993:111) called, "defensive accountability".

#### 4.7 Analysis of Head Office's Interview Responses

In the context of this section, the views of head office are represented by two senior officials engaged in the Ministry of Higher Education

and Technology. One is the Permanent Secretary, Dr Mike N. Mambo. The other is the Acting Director of Manpower Planning and Development, Mr N.N.M. Munetsi. Substantively, Mr Munetsi is the deputy director but in the absence of a director during the past 16 months he continues to handle college issues and all other complex matters that would normally be referred to the director. The permanent secretary has been occupying the position for over five years, having himself run a technical college as principal for some two years, then moving up to the director's level in the same ministry and briefly working as permanent secretary for the Public Service Commission. The acting director has been with head office for over 10 years occupying the same position.

In accordance with suggestions made by Hanson (1985:145) these two senior officers who oversee the functions of college principals, could be better placed to explain "the organisational equilibrium of the college", in terms of how it seeks to survive under conditions of a changing environment. As was indicated to me the principal of Westgate submits annual and termly reports to head office, apart from the biannual meetings involving all principals and head office. Both officers will explain their experiences in relation to college management, their expectations and their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the overall performance of Westgate. Comparisons will be drawn using themes that have been described by the industrialist or the principal. As patterns emerge, significant issues are noted, clustered and analysed using some theoretical perspectives.

#### 4.7.1 Transformational Imperatives from Directions to Reforms

The permanent secretary in head office speaks of the principal as occupying a critical role in the ministry in that he/she is the “accounting officer” who is in full control or “should be in full control of his/her college”. Personnel in head office should be seen as “link persons” between institutions and head office. Asked to comment on the quality of technical and vocational education in colleges generally, the permanent secretary feels that there are “gaps in communication between most colleges and their advisory committees”, to the extent that in some cases, advisory councils and committees are not quite open in advising the principals on the programmes they run.

In respect of Westgate in particular, the permanent secretary is optimistic that the new management “is going to do a good job”. There was a general feeling expressed by both the permanent secretary and the director (acting) that the management at Westgate had started well and were involved in consultation and liaison with industrialists whilst creating a team spirit at the college.

Such an approach is supported by Beer, Eisenstadt and Sector (1990:158) in their theory that “if new management is to be effective, it should start with creating teams, sharing information and delegating responsibility far down the hierarchy” as a way of establishing a task-driven organisation, at the initial stage. This approach which the management of Westgate has adopted is further supported by Toffler (1980:120) in a sense. He warns that the “Newtonian thinking” which has its roots on the conception that “outputs are proportional to inputs” no longer applies to the contemporary management scene where phenomena are unpredictable and that “unpredictability affects all planning, all inputs and outputs” hence the need “to establish teams and

information sharing strategies in order to manage the uncertainty of the complex organisation”.

There appears to be some points of convergence on the management approaches of Westgate, between the permanent secretary, D r Mambo and the acting director Mr Munetsi. The acting director supports the permanent secretary’s view that Westgate is adequately preparing students for the labour market demands. In carrying out this mandate, industry is heavily involved, according to the perception of head office.

In the acting director’s view, the removal of the past principal was a result of audit reports which highlighted “misappropriation of funds, irregularities in financial management and complaints of poor internal relations with staff” which kept being forwarded to head office in the form of anonymous letters. In his words: “These letters took us a lot of man -hours trying to confirm one way or the other what was going on”.

According to the permanent secretary, the biggest problem facing both colleges and head office is “transformational governance”. He explains this by saying that the “cultural thing is that in the past colleges got too much direction from head office”. Efforts to reverse that trend appear problematic and complex. In his own words:

Some principals have stopped thinking. There are some who pick up the phone almost every day for small little things. There is a problem what shall I do? I can give you an example, a college runs out of coal for cooking ... they phone and say, we have run out of coal, the supplier is not supplying what shall I do? I say, what are you doing there? You

are the principal; you want me to run the college for you? Deal with the problem.

The permanent secretary believes that head office makes policy but these are only guidelines, so the decision rests with the principal. The feeling in head office is that principals should have more confidence and technical knowledge about their principalship.

Part of the problem, according to Dr Mambo is that:

Most of the principals have stopped to grow. They stopped to advance themselves professionally. They have become principals and decided to rest. You can't do that in this world. If you are in management, you should take the initiative to learn about management. If you are handling finance, you should not wait for me to set up a workshop for you to learn about finance. You should assess yourself ... and say I am not properly qualified in this but my job demands me to know this.

On the question of under-funding for Westgate, the permanent secretary's opinion was supported by the acting director's views that the issue was not so much the "under-funding" but how to use properly the little that was provided and top it up with the college's own fund-raising activities. The permanent secretary comments: "Nobody ever gives anybody sufficient funds". He further adds: "What the principals don't tell you is what they are doing with those meagre resources".

The problems of financial management and under-funding at Westgate can be better analysed using Nadler and Tushman's (1980) notion that a budget plan is only an indicative tool in financial management. Head office is looking at Westgate from a national



macro viewpoint where prioritisation and control are crucial issues in budget allocations to all colleges. Some national needs may therefore supersede supplies to specific colleges. Smit and Cronje (1992) emphasise information as the key element to a appropriate budget allocation. According to them, some institutions may fail to get adequate funding because they do not provide sufficient information to justify their needs. This notion is supported by Walsh (1991) who argues that information is what makes or breaks any institution.

Given this analysis, I would maintain that if head office has agreed to call these principals “managers” as described by Mr Munetsi, the basic principles of management are the same. In this case effective communication should be the basic tool in sound management practice at the institutional level (Drucker 1977:135).

In discussing the management role of the principal, Mr Munetsi agrees with Dr Mambo that the principal’s role is in two dimensions. He/she “wears two caps as a sub-accounting officer making him/her accountable to the ministry and to the public” for the application and use of public funds. He/she is also the “administrative and management head” of the institution in terms of ensuring that programmes are being planned and organised in a conducive teaching and learning environment. In this regard, Mr Munetsi suggests that principals learn financial management as well as public relations and communication skills. According to him, head office would be “far much happier if the problems that pertain to any institution are dealt with in the institution” without intervention from head office.

The relationships between head office and colleges in general and between head office and Westgate in particular, appear complex. The permanent secretary would want some “transformational imperatives” to take place and he has advised all principals to “change their behaviour” and become more creative. That way, colleges will be able to reduce their reliance on head office authority, formal rules and procedures. On the other hand, Dr Mambo feels that some key personnel in head office do not seem to understand their role *vis-à-vis* dealing with technical and vocational colleges. In his own words:

Head office should just facilitate the work of our colleges, to give the colleges the resources, the advice and the support they need in order to get their jobs done effectively. There are many instances where in fact head office has become a stumbling block for the work of colleges. We want to see more horizontal communication between head office and colleges and not the vertical that people are so used to.

The relationship between Westgate and head office is going through a transitional period of transformation. In such a situation, the advice advanced by Beer *et al.* (1990:159) becomes relevant. According to them, the most effective way to change behaviour “is to put people into a new organisational context which imposes new roles, responsibilities and relationships on them”. This could create a situation which, in a sense, could “force” new attitudes and behaviours on people. The usual tendency based on common beliefs found in “old management” practices is to tell people to change their attitudes.

Senge (1990) warns that telling people to change can just become a religion, thus, depending on whether you believe in that change or

not or you may believe but not committed to the transformation process. Whilst head office and colleges are caught up in some “transformational imperatives”, head office is satisfied with the way Westgate is fostering consensus for its shared vision. What could be needed is cohesion based on effective communication. This cohesion between the two opposing entities could place Westgate management into “a new organisational context”. With sound vertical communication between the centre and the periphery, Fowler and Graves (1995) argue that revitalisation becomes easier to spread to all institutions, rather than merely pushing it from the centre (head office). Head office will need a particular mind-set to deal with managing change, one that recognises the practical process of “transformational imperatives” as a learning process which takes place unit-by-unit.

This learning process could be similar to what Senge (1990:89) describes as “metanoia”, a fundamental paradigm shift of the mind that will enable people to do something that they were never able to do before and “even thought impossible or far-fetched”. I maintain therefore that at head office level, those “transformational imperatives from directions to reforms” are leadership provisions by the head of the ministry (PS) meant to bridge the gap between where the college is and where it wishes to be in future.

#### 4.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources

I now turn to documentary sources in the form of minutes of college meetings, policy documents and notices. These will be analysed and discussed with a view to gaining a fuller contextualised picture of

governance and management at Westgate. This will provide elaborated meanings for interpretation of issues and concerns. Where necessary relations between variables will be noted, comparisons will be made and evidence weighted with data collected through interviews and observations.

Before the arrival of the new principal, minutes of the meeting between the college advisory council and college management, dated 7 October 1997, showed that Westgate had gone on for five years without adequate teaching staff. Despite the college having made a case for five additional posts and submitted the document to head office in 1994, there was evidence of a lack of favourable responses from head office.

Several correspondences had been written by the college on the same issue and as a desperate move, a member of the college advisory council was asked to take the matter up with NAMACO who would take up the issue with head office. Nothing further materialised. A closer analysis of correspondences and minutes of meetings held throughout 1996 and 1997 indicate that the real issue affecting the relationship involving college advisory council, head office and college management was poor communication. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 1997 at which members of the college advisory council show that members specifically complained about poor communication.

Among other issues, there was concern raised about why council members had not received invitation letters to the college's Open Day held on 4 June 1997. Most of the minutes of meetings held between the inception of the college advisory council in 1995 and the end of 1997 reflected that communication was a real issue at Westgate, to

the extent that on graduation day (1997) the guest of honour did not turn up due to a communication breakdown.

In the area of curriculum implementation, senior staff at Westgate had complained to the former principal about the reduction of the year's teaching period for the National Certificate, from thirty-nine weeks to thirty-six weeks. This had serious implications for the quality of teaching and learning since some "key additions" had been made to the syllabuses. In one heated meeting, the principal's response was simply that the "shortening of the teaching and learning period was an imposition by head office", rather than indicating that the principals had agreed to that decision at their usual meetings with head office held at Kwekwe the previous year (1996). The reasoning of principals at the time was mainly "to close early and save on costs" since prices of food commodities had gone up without a corresponding increase in their termly budgetary allocations for feeding students.

One major concern raised by industrialists and reflected in minutes and reports, was that the college was not operating at full capacity, given its infrastructure, classroom sizes and the equipment. Evidence showed that the overall lecture-students ratio was 1 to 12 and this was deemed reasonable by college management on the basis that some areas like electrical engineering were still experiencing staff shortages as defined in the college establishment. The college advisory council, on the other hand, felt that there were still empty spaces, thus creating unnecessary wastages at a time when the demand for skilled workers was considered to be outstripping the supply.

Despite these debates, the contentious issue by industrialists was that the college needed to expand its activities and introduce new courses in construction trades, thus creating a more viable justification for additional posts.

Reading through the college annual reports from 1994 to 1998, I became aware that head office had carried out a job evaluation exercise in 1994. The result of this had brought about the re-grading and upgrading of teaching posts from manpower training officers to lecturers and the creation of five additional teaching posts. Despite these efforts by head office, the past principal had been disappointed since he had felt that his position of principalship at grade four, should have been elevated to a higher status, grade three, equivalent to the principal's position in a relatively bigger college than Westgate. The grade three level, as indicated by head office, is normally reserved for colleges whose students enrolment capacity exceed 1 000 and whose highest level of courses went beyond the National Certificate to the Diploma level.

In this debate, it emerged that Westgate had been established for purposes of training and developing skilled workers to the level of National Certificate and not beyond, as highlighted in the Ministry's Human Resources Development Plan (1996 -2000, Chapter Four) . The same plan confirmed that in the majority of cases, courses run at Westgate between 1994 and 1997 showed that the college was operating at between 57% and 65% capacity utilisation.

Verma (1990) advised that the achievements of a technical college should not be judged by the adherence to the schedule of examinations and prevention of forced closures, but rather on the basis of the quality and relevance of the curriculum, a suitable

climate for effective horizontal and vertical communication and a conducive environment for teaching and learning processes. He is not alone in this belief. Middleton *et al.* (1993) support this notion and point out that in a technical and vocational education environment, competitive levels of graduates become the critical factors to consider in managing such complex processes involving knowledge and skills acquisition as well as technology transfer.

Given this picture of Westgate reflected in various documents, it appears to me that before the arrival of the new principal, Westgate management was going through defective communication systems, negative expectations and problematic interactions.

Van der Westhuizen (1991) stressed that the need for effective communication at a college starts with the principal's understanding of him- or herself and role first. Sergiovanni (1991) pointed out too the principal's commitment to openness and goal-orientation as key organisational tools in bringing about effective communication. The former principal of Westgate had expected that his position would be upgraded. Such expectations, if they are not met could result in what Organ (1983:135) called a "lack or drop of organisational citizenship". This "lack or drop" could create an environment in which management is not prepared to "go an extra mile" beyond his/her job description or in this case, a feeling of being marginalised by "head office". That affects organisational efficiency.

The concept of "organisational citizenship" demands pro-social and extra-role behaviours as a conscious part in a managerial style. The relationships involving head office, industry and the college were problematic between 1994 and 1997. The new management of Westgate will need to impart to the college the necessary dynamism

to meet the new demands and challenges. Whereas head office believes that the college principals must be empowered and given more responsibilities, I maintain that what is needed is more authority and autonomy in decision-making.

Various theorists (Mintzberg 1989, Stewart 1991, Smit and Cronje 1992, Murgatroyd and Morgan 1994) support the notion of decentralising decision-making as a way of creating challenges, intrinsic motivation and accountability among “station” managers or in this case, among principals. Responsibility and empowerment without the necessary decision-making authority tend to create problems of accountability. I therefore feel that government rules and procedures adopted for convenience are rather inappropriate since the main concern of the governance of colleges, as amplified by the permanent secretary, is growth.

The principal of Westgate should be given the latitude for growth and creativity so as to enable him to create knowledge, working ethos, technical skills and an environment conducive to appropriate teaching and learning standards and outcomes accepted by the local industrialists. This could bring about in the system, the necessary dynamism for promoting innovative initiatives and reforms, as currently done by the Westgate principal who appears to be one of those taking the lead in this reform process.

#### 4.9 Observations

In this section I will present and discuss data gathered at Westgate through observations. This additional information will validate key issues and concerns raised by the principal, the representative from



the industrial sector and head office. Linkages will be sought and analysed between intended outcomes instituted by the college management, expectations of head office and industry and actual activities taking place at Westgate. From these analyses of observations, interpretations will be drawn in order to reach new meanings of management and governance at Westgate.

The infrastructure of Westgate is well designed with signposts clearly marked and providing appropriate information directions. The grounds appeared properly maintained at the time of my visit and the “groundsmen” were busy tilling the soil, watering the lawns and cutting grass. As I entered at the main gate, the security guard was polite, helpful spontaneous but ‘firm’ in providing me details and directions to the principal’s office. Generally, the buildings seemed well cared for. The reception area looked busy and receptive whilst providing a sense of some work going on at the institution.

As I observed students doing their practical exercises and theoretical lessons in three departments (Automotive Engineering, Fabrication Engineering and Electrical Engineering) during the three days that I was at Westgate, I noticed a generally productive climate with happy students and happy staff. Each time I was introduced to a group, there were smiles, attentive listening and a hospitable greeting, then the students would continue with their learning activities. Interaction between students and teaching staff was quite visible and showed a sense of contentment and accomplishment. In most instances, the thoughts, feelings and reactions expressed by the teaching staff reflected a sense of openness and high morale, as I walked around and talked to them about their job situations in their environment.

There was a sense of satisfaction with the new college management and in most cases staff did not want to talk about the past college management. I got the sense that they did not want to be reminded about what one lecturer called the “bad past experiences”. In the electrical engineering department, the training equipment, machinery and tools that students were working on during their practicals looked more than adequate for the number of students attending any one given session. The head of department felt that he could do with a few more students if management were agreeable to recruiting more. The issue of under-utilisation of facilities and the need to increase the intake in that department appeared visible.

The impression I got was of an institution in which students and staff are working towards some collective goals within a “new” business-like climate. The new management is in transition and they are trying to bring in changes in an environment whose past was riddled with conflicts between staff and management. This was confirmed by head office and in a way, by the staff’s refusal to talk about the past. In this situation the principal seems to be doing what Smither (1994:265) called “unfreezing, moving and re-freezing the organisation”. This refers to the process of opening the organisation to change, introducing changes and stabilising the introduced change. The principal is therefore managing change in an environment in which he must watch out for the delicate balance between “driving forces and hindering forces” as warned by Garrett (1997:187) in his conception of the “field force analysis”, as the principal moves from the present position to the desired position.

Another key issue that remains to be addressed is the question of striking a balance between capacity utilisation for education and training and maximising on limited allocated financial resources. By

establishing a production unit, Mr Raza appears to be taking the advice of Sergiovanni (1991:21) who suggested that: “ In such complex managerial challenges, the principal must develop plans and strategies for helping activate appropriate financial support for education”. This requires him to understand the dynamics of his environment, head office and the national politics of the country.

#### 4.10 Triangulation and Summary of Findings

In studying issues and concerns at Westgate Vocational Training Centre an attempt has been made to synthesise data from policy documents, minutes of college meetings, interview responses and observation of the situation on the ground. The study has been done within the context of governance and management involving the principal, the industrial sector, head office senior staff and some students that I was able to meet in their natural settings. Relevant issues and concerns have been analysed and discussed.

In conceptualising the management role of the principal in the governance of Westgate the relationships involving college management, the private industrial sector and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology were explained. In that interpretative process the relevant theories were developed. The chapter starts with a review of the background to the establishment of Westgate and an analysis of the mission and purpose of the technical and vocational college. Documents are examined and data are confirmed with observations of mission statements placed on the walls. The purpose of the college is further confirmed with interview responses of Mr Raza. The nature of governance and management is examined *vis-à-vis* the principal's management role.

Mr Raza's understanding of his role as a "planner and organiser" is commensurate with my observations of well laid out schedules of meetings, time-tables and clearly displayed work-plans. In further triangulating data based on my observation of motivated students and staff with data arising from interview responses of the principal and the industrialist, it would appear that there is a culture of effective communication at Westgate.

An entrepreneurial role is being set by the "newly" appointed principal Mr Raza. He realises the complexity of his job, the dynamic environment in which he operates and the need to accept "contractual accountability" to the private industrial sector for the production of employable and highly competent skilled workers, as well as "professional accountability to oneself and colleagues" as advanced by Bottery (1992:120). Industry in Bulawayo is generally happy with the principal's managerial style which tends to borrow from the collegiality model of governance as propounded by Baldrige *et al.* (1986).

I thus get the sense that a work-oriented organisational climate has been set at Westgate alongside productive interactions and communication with the outside private industrial sector. There are however, problems of bureaucratic controls and "impediments" with head office which appear to emerge from a misunderstanding of role expectations by the two opposing parties. Communication between the college management and head office through the college advisory council and NAMACO, does not seem to yield any results, more so, at a time when head office is trying to push for some reforms at Westgate. This is confirmed by both meetings and interview responses.

Triangulated issues are analysed and discussed with the conclusion that at the college level there are transitional attempts towards moving into a situation which suits Taylor and Hill's (1997:166) description of "total quality management". This is inferred in the sense that the principal of Westgate is organising and involving every department every activity at every level, the "outside customers for his products" (industrialists as stakeholders) to work properly together for the effectiveness of the college. At the head office level, attempts to provide policy direction to Westgate could be creating 'wrong signals' at a time when budgetary cuts are already creating serious demands on Westgate.

In concluding this case of misunderstandings between head office and the college, a quotation from Huysamen (1996:36) might provide a solution:

Organisational performance means the outcome of people resources and certain environments being brought together with the intention of producing certain results.

In mobilising "people resources" Senge (1990) has further suggested re-humanising the organisation through effective communication and motivation of people. Head office will need to realign this conception while putting forward their expectations to Westgate.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CASE STUDY OF KWEKWE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore the total picture of what happens at Kwekwe Technical College and explain why things happen the way they do within the context of governance and management. The chapter will be characteristic of what Miles and Huberman (1984) described as an assembly of fragments involving attitudes of people, feelings of people, critical happenings and problems associated with the governance of Kwekwe Technical College.

In an educational case study approach, Cohen and Manion (1997) have suggested the appropriateness of providing a contextual background of the social setting before probing deeply and analysing intensively the phenomena that constitute the study. Based on this advice, I shall present a background of Kwekwe Technical College. This will be followed by a discussion on the nature of governance involving the institution, the various interview responses of key players, analysis of documents, observations of the natural setting of Kwekwe as a technical and vocational institution and relating issues and concerns to theoretical insights examined in chapter two. As pointed out in chapter four and supported by Robson (1997), through descriptive-dialogic processes, it becomes easier to deepen our contextual interpretation and understanding of organisational issues that impact on governance of Kwekwe Technical College as a particular contemporary phenomenon. In this chapter therefore, I

shall analyse and explain the current governance and management scenario at Kwekwe. Problems and forces that are perceived to be causes of those problems will be shown.

In analysing and discussing issues and concerns geared towards learning the uniqueness and commonality of governance and management at Kwekwe Technical College, I shall be guided by Stake's (1995:1) suggestion that:

We enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how actors function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus with a willingness to put aside many presumptions, while we learn.

The social, political and economic dimensions of interactions and relationships involving Kwekwe's management, the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology and the private industrial sector will be captured in the views of the key participants, analysed and discussed. The sub-headings that are used are drawn up from a content analysis of clustered themes that tend to be reflective of those issues emphasised by the participants.

## 5.2 Background

Kwekwe Technical College is located approximately 2,5 kilometers from the centre of Kwekwe Town along the Mvuma Road. The town is positioned in the middle of the two major cities of Zimbabwe, Harare in the northern part and Bulawayo in the southern part. The technical and vocational institution is situated adjacent to Msasa Park suburb near the railway flyover and the main railway station. According to documentary sources, the college was constructed and

equipped by Union Carbide Zimbabwe (Pty) Ltd, a company now called ZIMASCO. The construction was completed in 1980 at the advent of Zimbabwe's independence. Upon the completion of the construction and equipping of the institution, Union Carbide donated the institution to the government of Zimbabwe. According to an official statement extracted from the records of the hand-over take-over ceremony (1980), the company stated:

As a gesture of goodwill and a mark of confidence in independent Zimbabwe, Union Carbide Zimbabwe donates this infrastructure and equipment to the government and people of Zimbabwe.

Initially though, the college had been established with the intention of catering for trainees and students from the Union Carbide Zimbabwe and its subsidiary organisations in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

However, the company later on decided to donate the institution to the government having felt among other things, that Union Carbide would under-utilise the facilities at a time when government was planning to establish a technical and vocational college in the area.

The college offers full-time technical and vocational programmes for the 'Midlands' industrial population in the following disciplines: automotive engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer studies, commercial studies (business and secretarial courses) and part-time education development courses (further education and instructor training). These courses are certificated at the National Certificate level, the Diploma level and at the Higher National Diploma level.



## Aim of the Institution

Sergiovanni (1991) has advanced the notion that education programmes should aim at achieving specific objectives within national development plans set by governments and their communities.

In line with this notion, recent education management thoughts, supported by various authorities (Tricker 1984, Dalin 1998, Hoy and Miskel 1991, Psacharopoulos 1991, Walsh 1991) have emphasised the importance of clearly defined mission statements in educational organisations and the need to display them. This current debate appears to emerge on the basis that people in education and indeed in technical and vocational education should constantly understand why they are in the system, where they are going and how they will reach there. This is crucial in technical and vocational programmes where according to Verma (1990) the fundamental aim is more focused on providing skills that are relevant to specific occupations or jobs. In this context of clearly defining goals for technical and vocational programmes, Middleton *et al.* (1993:108) have suggested that: “The output of a well defined goal coupled with an effectively managed system will result in the development of a broad skilled technical labour base that is able to meet the needs of a rapidly changing industrial organisation and technology, as well as a labour force that can engineer the process of growth and industrial change”. I maintain that Zimbabwe’s technical and vocational institutions are subject to the same notion of expected outcomes, hence the need for clearly defined goal statements in the form of mission statements. In the case of Kwekwe, the mission statement was not visibly displayed. The registrar of the college had to explain the aim of the college as follows:

To provide total quality technical and vocational education and training that is responsive to the individual needs and demands of the national economy by providing suitably trained and skilled manpower for commerce and industry in the country.

### Enrolment Capacity

The overall responsibility for the utilisation of the institution to full capacity and the organisation and direction of programmes rests with the principal. The table below shows the total enrolment capacity of Kwekwe Technical College over the past four years. The figures for both part-time and full-time students appear to indicate that the college is medium-sized by Zimbabwean standards and in comparison to Westgate, a smaller institution and Harare Polytechnic, a much bigger institution. The figures further demonstrate that the college has not experienced any significant growth pattern over the past four years.

Table 5.1

DISCIPLINE	1996			1997			1998			1999		
	F/TIME	P/TIME	TOTAL	F/TIME	P/TIME	TOTAL	F/TIME	P/TIME	TOTAL	F/TIME	P/TIME	TOTAL
AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERING	47	43	90	48	45	93	47	52	99	46	47	93
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	23	16	39	24	47	71	24	42	66	21	31	52
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	47	52	99	35	45	80	48	39	87	46	36	82
COMMERCE												
a) BUSINESS STUDIES	165	238	403	127	296	423	184	279	463	171	197	368
b) COMPUTER STUDIES	20	24	44	20	23	43	22	32	54	44	32	76
c) SECRETARIAL STUDIES	115	28	143	98	65	163	115	68	183	113	75	188
d) EDUCATION	24	-	24	41	-	41	29	-	29	-	31	31
TOTAL	441	401	842	393	521	914	469	512	981	441	449	890

Source: Kwekwe College Registrar (July 1999)

In concluding this brief profile of Kwekwe Technical College, it is essential to note that the heaviest concentration of iron and steel

'works' and processing industries are clustered in and around Kwekwe Town.

The location of this heavy industry could have a strong impact on the technical and vocational institution in terms of adapting the institutional programmes to the ever-changing industrial environment as warned by various theorists (Deming 1986, Walsh 1991, Taylor and Hill 1997). This could be critical if the quality of graduates is to be improved in order to match the changing environment or the needs of consumers of technical education. Given this background, the nature of governance and management becomes easier to relate to the whole study and to discuss.

### 5.3 Nature of Governance and Management

As noted in chapter two, governance in this study is contextualised in terms of functional link structures of management processes or interactions, tensions and relationships involving college management, government control systems and the participation of the industrial private sector. Governance of Kwekwe Technical College is effected formally on the basis of provisions contained in the Manpower Planning and Development Act, Number 24 of 1994, read in conjunction with revisions made in 1996. In terms of this Act, Kwekwe has a college advisory council and departmental advisory committees consisting of employers, professional practitioners and professional bodies whose prime role is to sit with college management and advise on curriculum issues and reviews of courses. Under the policy of shared responsibility and partnership with stakeholders, the government of Zimbabwe operates a levy

system of one per cent of the employer's wage bills. This creates a 'pool of funds' called Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF). The 'pool' provides a second major source of funding to Kwekwe Technical College and similar technical and vocational institutions such as Westgate and Harare Polytechnic.

It needs to be noted that normal annual financial allocations of government budgets are provided for maintenance of existing services, besides ZIMDEF funding. The major areas of ZIMDEF's financial support are channelled towards infrastructural development, acquisition and maintenance of equipment and capital projects for creating cost-recovery systems or revolving funds by institutions themselves.

As noted in chapter four, the issue of financial management is defined in the Audit and Exchequer Act which gives accountability powers to the permanent secretary in head office whilst defining the principal as the "sub-accounting officer" acting on behalf of the permanent secretary. Students enrolled at Kwekwe do pay some fees whilst at the same time government provides them with grants and loans in the form of termly allowances. This money is meant to be used for transport and accommodation during the time when students are undergoing on-job training or practical training in industry. The issue of financial management at Kwekwe remains one of the key responsibilities of the principal's job in governance. In industrial organisations it can be argued that the more an organisation obtains its needed resources the more effective it is. Such an approach is most appropriate when a clear connection exists between the resources an organisation receives and what it produces. Rogers (1989:54) has advanced an argument that "in tertiary education, there is no clear connection existing between the

input or resources that an educational organisation receives and its output". This could well be the case in respect of Kwekwe Technical College.

Although the college is linked to the outside industrial sector through a college advisory council for relevance of programmes and for external efficiency, as suggested by Middleton *et al.* (1993:172) and as defined in the Manpower Planning and Development Act Number 24 of 1994, documentary sources showed that meetings are not taking place as regular and as often as they are supposed to. In 1996 only one meeting had taken place between the college management and the private industrial sector and again in 1997, one meeting had taken place on 13 March 1997, with the majority of members absenting themselves for that meeting.

At the time of gathering data for this research (July/August 1998) no meeting had taken place. The mechanism for maintaining external efficiency of the system and making the programmes demand-driven, appeared problematic at Kwekwe. In the areas of manpower utilisation and staffing, documentary sources showed that the authorised staff establishment had not changed over the past six years. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 1997 between college management and some members of the college advisory council indicated that the college management was desirous to increase its staff establishment so as to facilitate the expansion of courses. There was no further evidence to suggest that the issue was ever followed up although at the meeting some members of the council had volunteered to take up the matter with the local member of parliament and with the minister of Higher Education and Technology rather than with the permanent secretary. From this discussion it is clear that Kwekwe has not taken the advice of

Middleton *et al.* (1993) and supported by Verma (1990) that technical and vocational education should be directly linked to labour market needs through constant interactions and meetings between the college and representatives of industry. That way, writers argue, is a way of enriching and enhancing the learning experience if it is to produce an adaptable skilled labour force for industry.

These issues and concerns do raise questions such as: what arrangements are in place for good governance and who has the accountability for the management of the teaching and learning process or effecting strategic management? Some later sections of this chapter will address this debate. Having discussed some issues associated with the nature of governance and management at Kwekwe Technical College, we can now examine the role of the principal in managing the college, his brief background and problems affecting the effective management and good governance of the college

#### 5.4 Status and Profile of the Principal

The acting principal of Kwekwe Technical College, Mr Gilbert Mabasa, started his teaching career as a mechanical engineering instructor/lecturer at Kwekwe upon his return from Australia in 1982. On his appointment, Mr Mabasa had obtained a Higher National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. He rose through the ranks to become a lecturer-in-charge and then head of the mechanical engineering department, and finally vice-principal in 1992. In his own words Mr Mabasa indicated: "Due to a shortage of lecturers I was made lecturer-in-charge". According to documentary sources, the college was heavily staffed with expatriate staff.

Perhaps this could explain Mr Mabasa's belief that he rose fast because there were no Zimbabwean lecturers in his special field in the eighties when government policy was to promote Zimbabweans in technical colleges. Since 1992, Mr Mabasa has been acting as the principal of the college following the transfer of a substantive principal and the death of another principal who had briefly been appointed in 1997. At the time of conducting this research, Mr Mabasa had worked in the capacity of acting principal for a cumulative period of seven years.

In an in-depth interview with the director in head office responsible for technical colleges, Mr Munetsi, the status of the college principal was explained. In the director's words:

Kwekwe Technical College has had problems in terms of management. We have had one of our staff acting for a long time as principal and if one is acting, there are all sorts of reservations in terms of what decisions one can make, what steps, what plans one can do. This is because people expect a substantive man to come. We have had cases of sometimes a substantive principal not feeling well which means effectively the vice-principal was acting. We have lost a substantive principal hardly a month or two having been appointed so we are back to a situation where one is in an acting capacity.

According to Dalin (1998:81) the principal occupies a critical management position with three broad functions, namely "administrative" in terms of organising resources, delegating and decision-making; "innovative" function geared towards continuous improvement of the institution, developing programmes and evaluating them and a "social" function in areas of resolving conflicts, communicating with the internal and external environment



and providing 'personnel' care to staff and students. Studies by Potgieter (1972) cited in Van Der Westhuizen (1991) support the notion that the principal's management role is complex and varied in terms of being a leader, a liaison person, negotiator, monitor and a representative. Given the complexity and demands of the job, I maintain that efforts should be made to ensure that a substantive principal is appointed at Kwekwe Technical College. There are lessons to learn from Schein's (1992) warning that the head of an organisation influences the creation of the organisational culture which in turn influences the climate and the effectiveness of that organisation.

### 5.5 Analysis of the Principal's Interview Responses

At this point I present and discuss responses of the principal to the open-ended questions regarding his role in the management of Kwekwe Technical College, within the context of governance. Significant problems emerging from the governance scenario will be analysed and discussed. In analysing issues and concerns, attempts will be made to relate and connect the principal's responses with the perceptions and attitude of head office and those of the private industrial sector. As highlighted in the methodology chapter, the discussion and analysis will draw from the themes emerging from the various responses.

#### 5.5.1 Policy Transmitting Role

When asked to explain his own understanding of his role as principal of Kwekwe Technical College, Mr Mabasa was quick to point out:

My role is not only to represent Kwekwe Technical College but essentially I have to ensure that Ministry of Higher Education policy is transmitted to the institution.

Asked further to explain his job and how he was carrying out his duties the principal indicated that he was “accountable for anything that happens at the college”. For him to be effective, he believes that:

There must be a clear system of operation and clear back-up or support structures and resources provided by head office. I have a job description that outlines my key areas. I have a registrar and his assistant to assist me in administrative matters.

There is also the college advisory council that advises the principal and various committees like Finance, Graduation, Curriculum, Co-Curriculum and Welfare Committee and the Students Representative Council (SRC).

According to the Principal these committees were already operational at the college when he assumed duties of the principal. As a matter of monthly routine the principal chairs the Finance Committee Meetings and those that deal with SRC. According to him the rest of the committees and meetings are chaired by the vice-principal, with the exception of the college advisory council whose chairperson is elected by the council members in terms of the Act.

Another area which the principal considers essential in his management role is related to periodic inspections of syllabuses and schemes of work. On a fortnightly basis the lecturer-in-charge does the inspection and on a monthly basis the head of department

checks all the records and subsequently takes them to the principal at least once a term (three times in a year). In cases where schemes of work are not up -to-date, the principal deals with the lecturer concerned and in situations where the documents are not submitted to his office, the head of department is asked to explain. In describing how the system worked the principal emphasised that he took this to be one of his roles while his vice-principal was directly responsible for the day to day students activities.

The management role of the principal at Kwekwe is rigidly structured within a bureaucratic system where emphasis is on transmitting policy from head office and controlling the teaching and learning systems and activities through various inspection modes. In his management role Mr Mabasa refers to the job description that outlines his management boundaries.

Kreitner (1986:168) wrote that occupying a strategic management role involves "more than just following a few steps and policy procedures". He argued that the manager is required to think strategically, to develop the ability to see things in motion and to make sense out of a cloudy and uncertain future by seeing the interdependency of key factors.

In the context of management of education systems, this notion is supported by various authorities (Dalin 1998, Dekker and Lemmer 1993, Holmes 1993, Everard and Morris 1996) on the premise that managers who think strategically are able to envision their organisations in the context of environmental trends and events and to identify important interdependencies that cut across bureaucratic processes.

A useful tool for developing a strategic management role is, according to Kreitner (1986), the use of synergy or “synergistic relationships”. The concept occurs when two or more variables interact to produce an effect greater than the sum of the effects of those variables acting independently. In this case, interdependency is the key issue. Another tool that could be used is what Mintzberg (1989) termed “role understanding” which basically stems from a person’s understanding of other people’s expectations of his role. Given this analysis it seems clear to me that the principal of Kwekwe Technical College is rather comfortable in his role of “transmitting policy” from head office and referring to his job description for operational guidance and parameters.

#### 5.5.2 Problems in the Management of Internal Operations

Apart from managing the implementation of curricular through the inspection of schemes of work, the principal of Kwekwe is managing information. The college management has established a system of communication with staff through written circulars that are passed on in the form of running files. There is a file for confidential information which circulates among the principal, the vice-principal, the registrar and other senior staff such as heads of departments.

The principal further highlighted that in the area of information technology, the college was not connected to the internet system. Communication with the outside world is by telephone or fax services. According to Mr Mabasa the biggest problem that he was encountering in the management of internal operations was in bringing about any changes at the college. He commented:

Change is the only thing that is resistible at this college where you are dealing with human beings and where you are dealing with students coming from different beliefs and where you are dealing with laid down structures. At least we managed to introduce carpentry training as a course that previously was not offered.

Managing change is not always easy. Smither (1994:263) has warned that there are major barriers to organisational change which make it difficult for managers to effect changes. According to him:

People are usually more comfortable with the familiar, some individuals may automatically assume that changes will be for worse, other people may have unpleasant memories of earlier efforts to change or fears that in bringing new changes, management could exploit them or in some cases there could be perceived threats to lowering their status.

Smither (1994) is not alone in highlighting barriers to organisational change. Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborne (1994) have indicated that in situations where top management isolates itself, it loses touch with organisational realities. In such circumstances, effecting change becomes difficult or even more difficult under conditions of excessive bureaucracy. As a result of these barriers and fears to change, I am inclined to maintain that the crucial issue in managing change is how change is brought about, the process of effecting change. Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992:106) have suggested "the creation of the right kind of relationship at the right time as the key to innovation, effectiveness and change".

These kinds of relationships do not occur automatically, they are not simple products of good feeling and hard work but they do demand

flexible management approaches. Schermerhorn *et al.* (1994:675) have suggested that the process of managing change starts with properly integrated diagnostic actions or action research systems directed towards the right outcomes. Perhaps this what the principal of Kwekwe could start by doing.

### 5.5.3 Managing Relations with the Private Industrial Sector

The relationship between Kwekwe Technical College and the private industrial sector of commerce and industry is linked through a college advisory council. Asked to explain his experiences in dealing with industry through the college advisory council, the principal confirmed that in the past, the interaction and co-operation was on a 'sound footing' but things had since changed.

In his own words he stated:

Industry and commerce have been very helpful in the past but the responsiveness has gradually deteriorated. I think part of it is the economic environment. Companies are now saying they can't take our students for their practical training through industrial attachments. There has been also poor attendance of the college advisory council meetings.

It is clear that the linkages between the college and the external environment which absorbs the products from the system are rather weak and "shaky". Documentary sources (see pages 29-31) support my observations that there has not been any serious dialogue between the two systems during the past three years or so.

In chapter two, we noted that various writers (King 1986, Verma 1990, Middleton *et al.* 1993) have warned about the need for a technical institution to maintain a close relationship with industry. They have argued that industry must be involved as much as possible in curriculum development and periodic reviews of programmes, with a view to getting the courses more relevant to industrial needs and prevailing levels of industrial technology.

In the case of Kwekwe, some elements of the bureaucratic model of governance as discussed in chapter two, tend to militate against management's realisation of the critical need for involving commerce and industry in governance and also in assisting the college to ensure that technical and vocational programmes are directed towards labour market demands. King (1986) warned that this complex relationship can only be achieved through a high degree of regular communication and organised interaction. In this debate, perhaps the meetings between the college management and the college advisory council could be re-visited if the system of producing skilled labour force for industry through Kwekwe is to be revitalised.

#### 5.5.4 Managing a College with Manpower Gaps

The principal is not happy with the existing manpower gaps within the college's establishment. Evidence of attempts and efforts to get head office to recruit people with a view to filling up these gaps were shown. The principal commented:

Administratively there are so many personnel gaps. The registrar can only do so much but doesn't have an assistant registrar to assist him. The assistant registrar was discharged on acts of

misconduct. The lecturers who are there are not enough so we depend a lot on part-time lecturers whose payments are not coming on time, resulting in frustration.

According to the principal it is not just a question of manpower gaps but those officers occupying positions of responsibilities such as heads of departments, heads of divisions and lecturers in charge have not been appointed substantively. Such a situation results in their not getting their commensurate responsibility allowances.

While on one hand there seems to be a shortage of manpower at the college, on the other hand there is widespread grape-vine talk amongst the staff that they would be some retrenchments of personnel, particularly administrative support staff. According to them, these were government strategies to subcontract services to the outside world so that the principal is alleviated of some of the 'headaches' associated with managing all kinds of operations such as cleaning services, catering services, hostel cleaning and maintenance work. The 'manpower gaps', the uncertainty and the non-responsiveness of government to the prompt payment of allowances were issues creating a climate of low morale among staff.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:296) provided a warning that the principal should be aware of the real inner needs and desires of the staff under his control. This requires him to have a deeper insight into the origin and manifestation of the entire range of human emotions and needs. In situations of work over-load due to poor staffing Van der Westhuizen (1991) suggested that the principal should be aware of when intrinsic and when extrinsic motivation should be used to obtain the best results and to motivate colleagues, thus raising and maintaining staff morale. Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992:13) have



admitted that motivating people in organisations which are short-staffed is not easy. In situations of this nature, they suggested that managers should first break “boundaries” that make the organisation rigid and unresponsive. “Some of these are traditional boundaries of hierarchy and functions”. According to Gilmore (1992) these must disappear and be replaced with new ‘psychological boundaries’ that are invisible, where the principal and his/her staff create a team, establish working relationships and operate like one big family.

In the case of Kwekwe where there are manpower gaps, low morale among staff and uncertainty, college management should take the advice of Huysamen (1996). He maintained that management should not keep concentrating on planning, co-ordinating and controlling, but rather on harnessing the emotional components of worker motivation and creating those invisible boundaries geared towards creating an ‘educational family’.

#### 5.5.5 Managing a Complex Relationship with Head Office

Comments by the principal on issues of transport, staffing, disciplinary cases and resources provisions, do indicate that the relationship between college management and the head office is complex and problematic.

In his opinion the principal believes that the poor or non-attendance of college advisory council members of meetings, could be attributed to delays by head office in the processing and payment of sitting allowances and transport allowances. Mr Mabasa commented:

These people are supposed to be paid each time they come for meetings but now they are having to use their own money because of delays in these payments by head office. According to the information I have, government does not have enough money to pay these people so they simply use a lot of jargon to explain why they don't have enough money.

It seemed clear that in my multi-case study of three institutions in Zimbabwe, this issue was unique to Kwekwe. When I asked 'what kind of money' the college was talking about, it was confirmed to me that members of the college advisory council in all colleges are paid sitting allowances of one hundred Zimbabwean dollars equivalent to between sixteen and eighteen South African Rands (R16-R18). The argument of delayed payments therefore appeared insignificant taking into account the fact that these members are industrialists of a high profile, presumably occupying high positions in the private industrial sector. Also if head office is causing delays, why should these delays be peculiar to Kwekwe? There could be more to this than what may appear on the surface. Perhaps this could be an issue of a lack of self-reflection and adaptability on the part of college management in the manner that these meetings are planned and organised. Nadler and Tushman (1980) have warned that adaptability in the form of the college's capacity to critically examine itself, review its performance and match the changing requirements of its internal and external environment is a major criterion that could be used to evaluate the college's performance; besides the usual goal attainment and resources utilisation. Such issues will be analysed later in this chapter as they emerge from below the surface. The principal of Kwekwe may need to take the advice of Smith and Cronje (1992) in dealing with poor attendance of the college advisory council to college management advisory meetings, that every incident

of absence should result in a follow-up discussion simply to show concern and the seriousness of these meetings.

Disciplinary cases of members of staff are some of the issues and concerns creating tension between college management and head office. Where a member of staff is involved in what is considered by the principal to be 'an act of misconduct', the principal writes a report to head office which in turn will decide on what disciplinary action to take. According to documentary sources that I was able to examine, in the form Public Service Regulations of 1996 (latest instruments for governance of institutions) and Accounting Officers' Manuals (last revised in 1984) the principal is also given the option and authority of disciplining a member of staff under his control and leadership, then submitting a report to head office, describing the action taken and recommending both his/her findings and action taken for head office's endorsement. In this debate the principal felt that:

Principals should be expected to carry out certain decisions as principals without the need to refer to head office disciplinary cases of staff. The bureaucracy that is involved in these disciplinary cases is very slow to the extent that one gets very frustrated.

In spite of what he believes, Mr Mabasa still refers cases to head office rather than taking the option of solving issues at the college level and requesting head office to endorse his decisions. In this situation it is possible that the latitude and authority given and delegated by head office is not fully understood by college management. This complex scenario could be compared to the conception of the Johari Grid (1973) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991:103). The grid highlights what the educational leader knows

about himself/herself and what others know about him/her. The ideal situation is a process of “disclosure” so that the leader (head office) knows more about the strengths of head office.

Principals can thus anticipate what to expect in any given situation and look forward to be led in with confidence. In this case, head office as top management should attempt to increase its knowledge about its operational policies and awareness of its system so that principals as ‘subordinates’ can anticipate what to expect from head office.

On the other hand, the complex relationship between head office and college management, in matters of handling disciplinary cases of staff could be analysed in the context of the decision-making role of the principal. As advised by Mintzberg (1989), the manager must have the courage and tenacity to deal with personnel problems and conflicts and be able to resolve situations to everyone’s satisfaction. According to De Wet (1981) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991:39) management is all about decision-making in order to attain optimum results. This notion could stem from studies of Herbert Simon (1947) cited in Ducker (1977) which concluded that decision-making is the most crucial management process which aims at promoting and realising the objectives of the organisation.

The principal further explained that conflicts and misunderstandings have occurred between the college and head office over the recruitment of expatriate staff for the college by head office. Mr Mabasa commented:

We have had cases of people recruited, employed and coming through head office without proper

qualifications. They caused problems of poor performance and then I discovered that some of them were really not quite qualified for the jobs. They had fake documents. These people were imposed on the college but of course they were eventually removed by head office.

From the principal's comment, it was not clear why Kwekwe could not be trusted to do its own recruitment of professional staff or at least get involved in the process as noted in the case of Harare Polytechnic, that will be discussed in chapter six. It may well be that perhaps because Kwekwe's principal is working in an acting capacity, Mr Mabasa himself did not want to be drawn into that part of the discussion. This lack of trust resulting in poor relationships and inefficiencies could be related to what Sergiovan ni (1999) described as role ambiguity, thus creating a climate of crisis management.

#### 5.5.6 Managing College Staff with Connections in Head Office

According to the principal some of the problems affecting the relationship between college management and head office are created by those members of staff who have access and direct connections with senior people in head office. Mr Mabasa pointed out that in some cases, issues taking place on the ground at the college level are known by head office people "before you have even sent documents to head office". He cited a case of a lecturer refusing to recognise college structures and when management made representations to head office, the issue was dismissed and instead head office made reference "to other minor cases not as critical as that one". Another case was cited of a group of lecturers writing a petition to head office declaring that their head of department was ineffective. The group disregarded all laid down channels of communication but head office

did not question why lecturers were ignoring laid down procedures. According to the principal, such issues were causes for concern. The principal stated:

Recommendations are made, you don't get any feedback report then you wonder whether it is you the principal under investigation or your subordinates. We have asked head office to carry out boards of inquiries on cases of misconduct, inquiries are done but you are not given the minutes, then you are told that your case was not good enough or rephrase it, you are not told the reason why. We are discouraged from charging people with misconduct cases even those who deserve to be charged.

Several cases were cited by the principal including someone who should have been discharged on medical grounds but he/she was "still in the service". In another case, a lecturer who was believed to have misappropriated some computer software was dismissed by head office as lacking sufficient evidence. Instead head office insisted that the college was not maintaining proper procedures of hand-over take-over and correct procedures for safe-keeping of government assets. In that discussion the principal's standpoint was:

Some of these people have friends in head office or contacts or associates. There is an element of protectionism in general; hence, you find dubious excuses being used in delaying cases.

From this analysis what is emerging is lack of trust between the two opposing forces, head office and college management. Beer *et al.* (1990) wrote that one of the biggest obstacles in revitalising an organisation is a lack of trust between top management and staff. In such circumstances, Dalin (1998) suggested that top management

and in this case the head office, may need to look carefully at what they practise versus what they preach.

#### 5.5.7 Setting a Spiritual Climate among Students

In dealing with students, the principal believes that the mind is well catered for through “class time-tables and programmes” and the body is looked after through “sporting and recreation”. What then is emphasised by the principal is the spiritual side of the student.

As a strong Christian himself, Mr Mabasa felt that because he has set a spiritual climate, students tended to respect each other, reflect on their actions and seek dialogue with college management as a way of resolving conflicts. Through various programmes of Christian teachings and spirituality, there seems to be, according to the principal, “Christian values of honesty in the relationship between students and college management”. In this purview, the principal was keen to state:

I have never had any strikes by students against our administration and management. When they have written through their SRC to say there is a problem in the dining hall I have quickly intervened. We discuss and resolve issues. At times they have told us in advance that they are going to match out in solidarity with other colleges on strikes and we have allowed them to do so.

According to Sergiovanni (1991) the principal needs to create structures and processes that lay the groundwork for an open two-way communication. Mr Mabasa is succeeding in fulfilling

Sergiovanni's (1991) advice but using his spirituality, Christian values and principles.

#### 5.5.8 Managing with Limited Funds

While admitting that head office had been quite supportive in responding to the college's submission for funds, the principal felt that more funds should be injected with a view to purchasing some basic essentials such as more photo copying machines for use by departments and video equipment. There was a general feeling amongst both staff and management that more funds were needed for essential equipment that could be used to improve the teaching and learning process such as video cameras for filming role plays or funds for ordering the installation of more telephone extensions.

Despite these issues and concerns, Mr Mabasa was delighted to share with me that head office had given him a go-ahead to source funds for the various college projects such as the establishment of a library. There was therefore some admission of the latitude granted by head office for creativity and innovativeness. Innovativeness according to Schermerhorn *et al.* (1994:666) is not just creating ideas "but putting them into practice".

What also emerged as a serious problem in financial management was the question of government procurement as well as the commensurate tendering procedures. The college highlighted that at times funds earmarked for Kwekwe have had to be diverted to other colleges in cases where Kwekwe has encountered delays in the utilisation of those funds. The principal stated:



We don't get enough funding and it is very very frustrating. At times we get into a situation where we cannot use government vehicles for transport use because our head office owes the Ministry of Transport unpaid bills, so vehicles are confiscated or grounded by another ministry. We can't even buy our own vehicle because we are not given the funds. What we have is only a mobile coffin because it breaks down more than necessary.

Besides the difficult task of managing a complex system with limited funds as indicated by the principal, the college management expressed disappointment at the manner in which tenders were being awarded to the private sector companies, to carry out services at the college. According to the principal the majority of these companies did not have the capacity to finish the jobs hence, there were notable delays in a number of construction projects at the college. Given this scenario, it seems that the principal is caught up in some 'bureaucratic morass'. He does not take advantage of the authority given to him by head office to be more creative and raise funds. In this case Taylor and Hill (1997) have advised that if the head of an institution is caught up in an organisational trap of bureaucracy, he/she must cultivate a culture of questioning the status quo, questioning the systems and routines and creating a culture of creativity. As Drucker (1977) warned, management is about self-reflection if one is to be effective.

#### 5.5.9 Occupying a Stressful Position as Principal

In concluding this discussion on the principal's responses. Mr Mabasa emphasised that the job of a principal "was very stressful". He further went on to say that he was aware of a number of

principals who had conditions of high blood pressure. According to him:

These issues even spill over to domestic affairs because of stress. So it's difficult to motivate your subordinates when you yourself are not motivated. When things are going well there is no big deal because that is what you are there for but when things go wrong you are in trouble and everybody laughs. What I am saying really is that under the current structure the principal is just like a messenger for head office. You cannot make a decision. You have to refer things to head office and wait ... then get a response ... two years later.

According to Dalin (1998) responsibility cannot be delegated but authority to do certain functions can. The principal may need to realise that he has authority delegated to him by head office and he can also delegate certain tasks and functions under his authority. Sergiovanni (1991) talked about the high control legacy by college authorities such as head offices. Could this be the case with Kwekwe and head office?

The Kwekwe principal, whilst admitting that his role is that of transmitting policy, did confirm at some point that head office has given him the latitude for creativity and decision-making. Given this situation, one may conclude that perhaps the absence of any further positions or room for upward mobility in the form of promotional posts for principals could be a de-motivating factor. It could also be a lack of self-confidence or adequate training for the job. Further analysis and discussion will show a clearer picture.

Drucker (1977) suggested that in such cases of low motivation and stress, the responsible authorities or executive boards should strive

to keep the manager's job interesting through special assignments not directly related to the day-to-day activities of the job.

Other theorists on educational management (Van der Westhuizen 1991, Walsh 1991, Van Wyk 1992, West-Burnham 1992) have suggested that principals should be constantly trained and educated in an empowering style of leadership which recognises the key issues of taking responsibility, problem solving and decision making so as to get them far from what Van der Westhuizen (1991:334) warned as follows: "Un-involvement functions and distancing from responsibility can become a defence mechanism since they can serve on the subconscious level as a buffer for psychological protection". The college management of Kwekwe should by all means avoid stress and burnout attacks since they diminish the effectiveness of management.

## 5.6 Analysis of the Industrialist's Interview Responses

At the time of gathering data for this research, Mr Pasi, a training manager with Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company and a member of the college advisory council, was the acting chairperson. This was due to the absence of the chairperson who was out of the country and had delegated his authority and duty of chairmanship to Mr Pasi. In this regard Mr Pasi's responses to the open-ended questions in this chapter will be treated as representing the private industrial sector. This is the commercial and industrial sector situated in and around Kwekwe Town which interfaces with the management of Kwekwe Technical College through the college advisory council. Issues will be analysed and discussed whilst making connections with theoretical perspectives relating to governance and management

of a technical and vocational institution. Repeated themes will be compared with each other.

### 5.6.1 Ineffective Relationships between the College and the Industrial Sector

Asked if Kwekwe Technical College was sufficiently preparing students for the labour market demands, Mr Pasi indicated that the machinery and equipment at Kwekwe Technical College were out of date and therefore out of pace with the realities of engineering systems. He expressed concern at the widening gap between technologies in industry and curriculum relevance at Kwekwe Technical College where technical content was not being reviewed and equipment not being updated as often as necessary. The industrial representative felt that these issues had always been raised with college management but nothing had been done about them. According to him:

What needs to be done is to build a strong and effective relationship between college and industry. The college must go out and find out what is happening, what relationships are there. Meetings to organise these visits and interactions are not taking place.

How many times have we been able to form a quorum? Why? Our experiences in dealing with college management is ... promises ... promises ... this will be done ... etc. These are nice people but at the end of the day nothing really happens. In the last meeting that we attended, we were told how many students were pregnant. I am not

interested in that. I want to discuss how industry can help improve the quality of training.

Mr Pasi suggested that it would be important for the principal to sit in meetings and listen. According to the industrialist "if the college lacks specialist expertise in certain courses like hydraulics and pneumatics, we are prepared to release an expert from our company, ZISCO, to come to the college at least twice a week to teach". Mr Pasi emphasised that college management had to improve its management system and make it more effective. In his own words Mr Pasi stated:

We need strong management, people who can get things done. There is no direction at this college. Electrical department is doing its own thing, mechanical doing this and the other while automotive is going its own way.

The general feeling amongst industrialists, according to Mr Pasi, is that the principal should be a bit more aggressive with his head office and be more convincing to them in obtaining the appropriate needs of the college. The picture that the college management is creating, according to Mr Pasi, "is that of confusion and frustration". He further commented:

Maybe these principals are trying or they are being frustrated. What we now see at the college are people being moved around or demoted from a head of department to a lecturer the next day. We are never told what is going on by the principal.

At our own company here we are well equipped with experienced trainers so what we now do is to top up the difference in skills, in

those students who will have finished training at Kwekwe, before we can employ them.

As a possible solution to this non-responsiveness and poor relationships, Mr Pasi suggested that college advisory councils should be given executive powers, “to order a principal to do a, b and c or recommend his removal rather than waste everybody’s time and money”.

If this gloomy picture of Kwekwe being painted by the industrialist is accurate in some sense, what could be needed is to utilise an organisational development model that Schein (1992) cited in Smither (1994:272) described as the “process consultation approach”. This involves teaching management to solve its own problems through diagnosis of its own problems and devising a variety of possible solutions. In this case the consultant does not need to be an expert in the problem area but must be aware of the processes that occur in the organisation and also establish a trusting relationship with the organisation.

Various writers (Rogers 1989, Senge 1990, French, Bell and Zawacki 1994) support this model as having a long lasting impact instead of the traditional “doctor-patient” model where a consultant comes for a short time finds out what is wrong and recommends a programme of therapy or a “purchase model” where the organisation determines its requirements and purchases. Kwekwe’s college management faces the challenge of substantive changes in its way of interacting and collaborating with the private industrial sector.

## 5.7 Analysis of Head Office's Interview Responses

The views of head office are represented by the Permanent Secretary for Higher Education and Technology, Dr M. Mambo, and the Acting Director responsible for technical and vocational colleges in the Ministry, Mr N.N. Munetsi. Both officers by virtue of their positions and mandate in terms of the Act governing the institutions are better placed to comment and explain their experiences in relation to the management of Kwekwe Technical College. Significant issues and themes will be noted, clustered, analysed and discussed while connecting them to some relevant theoretical perspectives.

As suggested by Swanepoel (1993) those who dominate the power structures of how organisations should be managed must be made answerable for those issues that can influence the type of climate that is created by the manager. In this section, areas of concern in the governance of Kwekwe Technical College will be handled by both the Permanent Secretary and his Director.

### 5.7.1 Organisational Systems and Relationships Needing Rehumanising

Mr Munetsi speaks about his experiences with Kwekwe as somewhat illuminative. He believes that the weaknesses that have affected the effectiveness of Kwekwe "are in the system and not on the principal". According to him, the college is not doing well in financial management but in the same vein, he blames head office for centrally controlling things using some 'outdated' regulations and procedures contained in the Audit and Exchequer Act, Chapter 168

and drawn up by people outside the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology.

In this regard, it seems evident to me that financial management is made more difficult by a long list of other players who draw up policies and regulations for colleges. NEP (1992) warned that fragmentation of power in drawing up policies and regulations can undermine clear priorities. In respect of management at the college level, Mr Munetsi stated:

The senior accounting staff, the senior staff officer and key supportive staff at Kwekwe Technical College have turned out to be inadequately equipped for their work. At the same time it is unfortunate that the principal does not play an active role in selecting the chief senior officers for staffing and accounting. Those people are appointed by head office and are going to work with the principal who is not an accounting officer by training. We discovered that those senior officers who are in-charge of accounting and are meant to advise the principal on accounts, don't actually know about a balance sheet. So our system of appointments in head office is defective. Kwekwe has actually assisted me to understand more about colleges, when I was blind to the system. I have now personally observed the problem.

The director's open way of thinking is supported by Benjamin and Carroll (1996:713) who have advocated that only an open process, conspicuously including disagreements can eventually produce widely acceptable stable decisions. Mr Munetsi expressed satisfaction that things are changing and head office has now generally agreed to give principals more autonomy and decision-making latitude in the context of decentralisation and commercialisation of certain functions.



These changes, according to him, “will necessitate much decision-making taking place at the institution”. In his own words:

Decentralisation has to be entered with the element of accountability at the institution. If these old regulations can be reviewed to give more lax to the principal then I think what we would want to see happening will happen. Also training principals will go a long way so that they know how far they can go in taking action.

Suggestions by Mr Munetsi are in line with Bottery’s (1992:120) notion of contractual accountability to employers and to head office and also professional accountability to oneself and colleagues. It seems to me that head office will need to equip principals with another element of accountability described in chapter two as ‘offensive accountability’ where the manager chooses to demonstrate success. This could be integrated within the purview of the process towards decentralising authority from head office to principals.

At the time of gathering data for this research, all principals had just completed a week’s course on financial management for non-financial managers. On this issue, the permanent secretary feels that principals must be empowered with financial management concepts so that when the bursar or the accounting officer gives misleading information, he/she is able to pick it up, conceptualise the issue and make a management decision. In his own words: “we are trying to get all principals understand more about handling finance so that they can feel more confident”.

Asked to comment about his experiences in dealing with Kwekwe Technical College, Dr Mambo stated:

Kwekwe has been unfortunate in that it has not had a stable principal for sometime. The current acting principal has been there for a very long time running the show. We often get complaints about how he manages the school. If you ask me if the school is being run properly I would say no, it still needs improvement. The new principal who was supposed to take over there when Kalenga left did not last very long. In fact he died before he even worked there.

According to Vecchio (1997) management effectiveness is not possible if the manager is not fully aware of the insights of his role and his work. It is clear that the relationship between head office and Kwekwe is affecting management effectiveness.

Head office is aware of its role and its obligations and is also aware of the management problems at Kwekwe and the possible frustration of management. In analysing this picture of Kwekwe and its relationship with head office, one tends to feel that perhaps the entire system needs what Huysamen (1996:39) suggested as “the process of re-humanising organisational transformation”. In such a situation, key players in organisational governance should be more sensitive to each other’s problems. Kravetz (1988) also argued in favour of this notion of re-humanising the organisational system. He argues that authorities in bureaucracies like head offices tends to be too busy controlling and limiting people in their efforts instead of recruiting the right people at the right time and harnessing their capabilities. In this case of governance, both head office and the college could learn from Peter Drucker’s (1977) notion that the success of any system is determined by how well the collective performance is managed.

## 5.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources

In this section minutes of college meetings, policy documents, notices displayed at the college and legislative documents, will be analysed with a view to obtaining a total picture of governance and management at Kwekwe Technical College. Evidence will be compared with data collected through in-depth interviews and observations. This will give further elaborated meanings for interpretation of issues and concerns in respect of governance and management of Kwekwe Technical College.

Minutes of the only meeting held between the college advisory council and college management on the 13 March 1999 reveal that the membership turn out was poor; hence there was no quorum. However, the meeting proceeded to discuss issues affecting the management of the college. It was noted that both the head of business studies and head of the commerce division had been charged with cases of misconduct. This had resulted in the college having problems in recruiting replacements through head office. In the same meeting, mention was made in respect of government's intention to "privatise" certain operations of the college but at that stage the principal who had brought up the subject, was not clear himself on how the system would operate. Another serious issue that emerged in the meeting was the announcement of the loss of one of the college's date stamps. The loss was to be advertised in the press in order to safeguard the public against illegal use of the stamp. Documentary sources examined in the form of minutes, timetables policy memos showed little to indicate that outcomes were consistent with expectations. Issues that were significant were related to problems and to crisis management.

According to Hoy and Miskel (1991) if documented outcomes are not consistent with expectations of stakeholders, then the effectiveness of the institution becomes questionable. One of the key roles of the college principal is, according to Harris *et al.* (1997) to respond to expressed needs of the consumers of technical education. This kind of responsiveness does not come out vividly in the documents that I reviewed covering periods 1997 and 1998.

In the year 1996 the college managed to hold one meeting with industrialists through the college advisory council. Minutes of that meeting do show that to some extent, head office was assisting the college in upgrading the competence levels of the teaching staff through short courses in Germany. Further documentary sources indicated that new projects aimed at injecting a culture of entrepreneurship were being hampered by a lack of enthusiasm on the part of staff. Suggestions made by industrialists pointed to the need for involving students in such projects and mobilising them throughout. One of the projects which head office had granted authority for execution by college management was the issue of raising funds in order to purchase a bus for the college. Although the issue had been discussed the previous year, little progress if any, had taken place.

In the area of monitoring the teaching and learning processes documents supported by college annual reports and departmental reports indicated that the facilities at the college were being utilised to full capacity, between 1993 and 1998, despite shortages of staff in certain areas. According to Fidler (1997) this scenario of staff shortages operating at full capacity may pose a danger of work overload, causing "log-jam" in decision-making and subsequently

creating frustration amongst staff. Nonetheless, there was generally a fairly good pass rate at the college between 1993 and 1997.

Communication between head office and college management between 1995 and 1998 reveals that the college was experiencing burglaries, break-ins and theft cases of equipment and training machinery. As a solution, the college had requested the Zimbabwe Republic Police to carry out day and night patrols in and around the college. There was however no evidence to suggest that the patrols had achieved any significant results. As a matter of fact, there was documentary evidence to suggest that the ill-functioning of security street lights at the college could have contributed to attracting burglaries.

According to my analysis, the bulk of the communication between head office and the college, centred on the inadequacy of budgetary allocation of funds to the college with the resultant notion that this was hampering the acquisition of essential materials and equipment for training.

Other issues that constantly featured in the communication between head office and the college management related to the “cry” for construction of more houses for both lecturing staff and administrative staff. Responses were made from both sides.

According to Senge (1990) every organisation is a product of how its members think and interact. In the case of Kwekwe, documentary sources clearly show that there is need for greater interaction amongst the three key players in college governance, namely the college advisory council, head office and college management. Ross *et al.* cited in Senge (1990) tend to support this observation on the

premise that “it is not a question of redesigning the formal structures of the organisation but rather redesigning the hard-to-see patterns of interaction between people and processes”.

### 5.9 Observations

Robson (1997:191) suggested that direct observation as a research technique has an advantage of its directness as one watches what people do and listen to what they say. According to him observation is a useful technique of getting “at the real -life in the real world”. In this section of the research report I will present and discuss data that I collected through observations at Kwekwe Technical College. This will complement useful data gathered through in -depth interviews and through documentary sources. The additional information collected through observations will be discussed and analysed with a view to further validate those key issues that were raised by the principal, the college advisory council and head office . From these analyses interpretations will be drawn in order to reach new meanings of governance and management at Kwekwe Technical College.

The layout of the buildings, physical setting and outdoor space for games, sporting and gardens indicates a well -designed modern institution by Zimbabwean standards. As I entered the college and walked around, it seemed to me that the sign postings on campus are rather confusing and in some cases, not well placed. Furniture and the internal features of the buildings showed signs of poor maintenance and fast deterioration tendencies.

Generally there was an atmosphere of some productive work going on in the classrooms where I was able to observe the teaching and

learning process. What was rather striking was the lack of order in most of the classes that I observed. In some cases students were sitting on tables as the classes were in session. Details of timetables and curriculum implementation strategies were verified, including the learner tutor ratio.

As I spoke to the teaching staff, I got a sense of low morale and a lack of satisfaction with the manner in which the college was being managed. Two members of staff even indicated that they were making plans to transfer “to some other better institutions”. I got the sense that staff were making attempts at accomplishing their goals but without putting their feelings and inspirations into the system. On the other hand the students appeared jovial and quite contented with what was going on. In the administrative offices and in the reception area, I could see elements of strict procedures and a climate of bureaucracy. Interaction between teaching staff and students was quite visible whereas interaction between administrative staff and the rest of the people at the institution was rather formal.

The mood and expressions of the students could confirm what the principal described as a culture of spirituality and Christian values. This appeared to have a positive impact on the relationship between the students and college management. Sergiovanni (1991) suggested that in order to create a climate of trust between staff and management, there must be relationships established on the basis of both the individual dimensions of staff and the collective dimensions of a shared vision. Dalin (1998) supports this notion and emphasised that the potential for extrinsic motivation of staff is drawn from a shared vision. My observations at Kwekwe revealed to me that a shared vision and a clearly defined and displayed mission

statement are elements still to be addressed by management. As Senge (1990) advised, an environment for effective organisational development is possible if key players reflect on their actions and attitudes while re-humanising the institution.

### 5.10 Triangulation and Summary of Findings

Triangulation of data by both method and perspectives features in the case study of Kwekwe Technical College. Issues and concerns emerging from interview responses involving the key players, documentary sources and observations have been analysed and discussed. Some major interpretations were drawn and relevant theories developed in the context of governance and management.

College annual reports ranging from 1996 to 1999 confirm that there has not been any significant growth in enrolments. This 'static' position is commensurate with the lack of dynamism in the way the college is being driven emerging from the interview responses of the industrialist. The principal himself highlights weak functional link structures of management, tensions and poor relationships between college management and industry and between college management and staff.

Records of poor attendance of meetings, cancellations due to a lack of quorum further support my observations of a frustrated industrialist appointed to advise management. According to Smit and Cronje (1992) the symbols of an organisational culture include the state of the buildings, grounds, offices and the visible mood and outlook of the people. My observation of poorly maintained buildings and low morale among staff tend to support interview responses of



the principal who sees himself as merely a “liaison person and representative”. In a way, the manager of the college is not associating himself with the critical issues of accountability to staff, students and the outside industrial community. His understanding of his role is transmission of policy from head office within set boundaries of the bureaucratic system. The industrialist confirms that equipment is out of date and technical curricula are not being revised as a result of a lack of advisory meetings. The picture of “confusion and frustration” as pointed out by Pasi is cross-validated through observations and records of the only meetings that were held at the rate of one meeting per year, between 1996 and 1999.

At the beginning of the chapter, a review of the background to the establishment of Kwekwe was made. The nature of governance and management was examined. According to my findings the principal Mr Mabasa has been acting “for too long”. He has set a system of management that is closely linked to Bush’s (1995) bureaucratic model. The model does not seem to be commensurate with the dynamics of the institution particularly at a time when the responsible authorities are giving latitude and certain decision-making powers to Kwekwe.

Vecchio (1997) spoke of management putting social structures together so that the organisation becomes an institutional fulfilment of group integrity and aspiration. At Kwekwe it is clear that the staff are not quite happy with the management systems. What has emerged is a picture of crisis management, resolving conflicts and problems of bureaucratic controls. The head office has admitted that it is to blame for some of these problems at Kwekwe Technical College. In this regard, Taylor and Hill (1997) have warned that the effectiveness of an organisation is substantially influenced by the

assessments of members and leaders regarding “what works”. Head office should now reflect on its emphasis and judgement in terms of what works at Kwekwe.

The relationships between the college and its outside industrial sector has been examined. Substantial changes and seriousness of purpose will need to be re-visited with a view to improving the relationship. Documentary sources and observations have confirmed that the college and its environment are not operating in a synergistic manner.

College management is challenged by its outside industry to interact in a systematic fashion with a view to directing the systems towards producing graduates who are in line with labour market demands. Harris *et al.* (1997) have advanced the notion that educational institutions are also in a market environment where the whole basis of competition has become complex, with the need to set up systems for customer satisfaction. The management of Kwekwe may need to learn from this notion. As Vecchio (1997) argued management effectiveness is significantly influenced by the manager’s insight into his/her own work.

This view is shared by Mintzberg (1997) cited in Vecchio (1997:50 ) who stated:

The manager is challenged to deal consciously with the pressures of superficiality by giving serious attention to the issues that require it, by stepping back in order to see a broad picture and by making use of analytical inputs.

Both managers within the ministry's head office and within college management will need to understand this if governance and management of Kwekwe Technical College is to be revitalised.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CASE STUDY OF HARARE POLYTECHNIC

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the case study of Harare Polytechnic, an institution that is regarded by the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology in Zimbabwe as the largest technical and vocational college in terms of enrolment capacity, staff complement and budgetary utilisation. Based on the notion advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Robson (1997:416) that the use of case study reporting is a way of getting some order into qualitative field research reports, I shall attempt to feature a description of the context in which the enquiry took place, the nature of the research setting and in this case, the nature of governance and management, outcomes of the enquiry and a analysis of data, thus making an orderly research report.

I shall commence this chapter with a brief overview background of Harare Polytechnic in order to put into focus the research setting. As suggested by Cohen and Manion (1997), this will assist in understanding what is happening as we later discuss the principal's management role and the overall issues and concerns associated with the governance system of Harare Polytechnic. An approach similar to the one in chapters four and five will be adopted, in which emphasis shall be placed on feelings of key people in governance, their attitudes, their concerns and their expectations of the college. This will be done within the context of effective management and

governance of Harare Polytechnic as an essential tool for a system that is designed and geared to produce skilled workers for the labour market.

Taylor and Hill (1997:165) argued that educational establishments are:

... systems which not only possess those characteristics of an open system as originally propounded by Katz and Kahn (1966) but do import energy from the environment, transform that energy into some product then export that product into the environment and re-energising the system from sources in the environment.

If we maintain the notion analysed and discussed in chapter two that technical and vocational colleges are both “open systems” and “domesticated organisations”, then this chapter should provide an appropriate forum for examining and discussing issues and concerns at one of Zimbabwe’s largest technical institutions. In analysing issues emerging from the broader picture of Harare Polytechnic, ways of revitalising both management and governance will be suggested, based on relevant theoretical perspectives.

This chapter therefore aims at providing a better understanding of the dynamics involved in the governance and management of Harare Polytechnic, in the context of the participatory influence of the Ministry of Higher Education’s head office and the private industrial sector through the college advisory council.

As the analysis and discussion unfold in this report, the formation of sub-headings in the chapter will be guided by the key issues that are emphasised in the responses of key participants. This is based on

the advice of Miles and Huberman (1984:252) who suggested the notion of letting the mirror show the phenomenon through new forms of displays, as new data enter the picture.

## 6.2 Overview Background

Harare Polytechnic is situated approximately 1,5 kilometres from the main central post office in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. According to documentary sources, the college was built in 1939 as Salisbury Polytechnic, at a site between Fourth and Fifth streets, presently housing the Harare Provincial ZANU (PF) offices. The buildings later became inadequate and in 1963 some departments were moved to a new site (the current site) at the old Selborne School, off Prince Edward Street. In January 1964, the new complex was completed, hence, the relocation and the formal establishment of Salisbury Polytechnic which later changed its name to Harare Polytechnic soon after independence in 1980.

According to statistical records kept at the college, the total student enrolment capacity has rapidly grown from 2800 in 1980 to a level of 7500 by July 1998. New courses continue to be introduced in response to the emerging skilled manpower needs. After independence (1980) new departments were introduced, namely Mass Communication, Computer Science and Library and Information Science.

## MISSION AND PROGRAMMES

According to the Mission Statement that was handed to me by the Vice-Principal during the data gathering exercise (August 1998):

The Polytechnic seeks to play its full part in the overall development of a national skills base necessary for economic development and in response to the ever-changing manpower needs of commerce and industry.

It was further explained to me by the principal that in pursuit of this mission, the college provides trainees with vocational, technical and entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for salaried and self-employment in the various sectors of the economy. A variety of courses are offered in ten major disciplines as follows: mechanical engineering, automotive engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering and construction, business education, science and technology, printing and graphic arts, mass communication, computer studies and library and information science. Courses are offered on a full-time, block release and part-time basis. Certification of these courses is offered at three levels, namely: National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND). In addition, the college offers adult and continuing education programmes in a variety of subject areas as popularly demanded by the community.

According to Kiggundu (1996:1417) one of the critical strategies and contributions in communicating the organisation's philosophy and values is to display the organisation's mission statement in the reception area and in offices where members of the public are

attended to. Dali n (1998) supports this notion. In the case of Harare Polytechnic, as I walked around the college and met senior administrative personnel, it was apparent that the display of the mission statement appeared to have been underplayed or ignored.

Rashid and Archer (1983) have made an assertion that large educational organisations do have multiple goals, such as societal goals, output goals, product goals and system goals. According to their notion, these goals arise from a complex interaction of external as well as internal forces. Based on my analysis of the college's departmental reports, this appears to be the case with Harare Polytechnic. Multiple goals are prevalent.

In respect of output goals which have a bearing on consumers of technical and vocational programmes in the community within and outside Harare, there are some unique courses being handled by Harare Polytechnic alone and not by any other college in the country. Documented sources show that the college is one of the few institutions in the region (with the exception of some South African technikons) that provides training for instrumentation and control technologists and technicians. It is also the only college in Zimbabwe offering a full range of full-time library and information science courses. The college's mass communication department, according to the former principal, "has become a prominent media training institution in the sub-region, having catered for former Namibia and South African Liberation movements as well as students from other SADC countries". Further, the college's printing and graphics department is the only one in the country offering specialised training in origination, machine printing and print finishing, besides the common areas of fine art, graphic design and photography.



## ENROLMENT CAPACITY AND TRENDS

Statistical records of enrolment figures shown to me indicate that the female population has been declining during the period 1995 to 1998. In 1994 there were 1556 female students compared to 1659 in 1995. The figures shot up to 2013 in 1996 but dropped again to 1886 by 1997 and continued to drop to 1880 in 1998. Reasons for this downward trend in respect of female students were not given. Nonetheless some factors that could have contributed to this drop will be explained later in this section through an analysis of the holistic picture of the organisational climate prevailing at the institution. The data also show that although the total enrolment capacity has taken an upward trend, from 5405 students in 1994 to 6175 by 1997, enrolment patterns in the business and commercial areas have shown a continued decline. Further analysis did show that the business and commercial studies are invariably dominated by female students, thus pointing to the downward trend in the female population.

Documented sources in the form of annual reports highlighting enrolment figures *vis-à-vis* space utility during the period 1994 to 1998 show some noticeable deficiencies in the utilisation of space in almost every department of the college. The explanation provided was that the college was operating with inadequate staff, inadequate financial back-up provisions and in some cases, limited resources like computers for computer-aided design (CAD) in drafting and design subjects offered in mechanical engineering.

Given this complex scenario of programmes and capacities, it may be useful to seek to understand the changing nature of the wider society in which the college is set, hence, the need to discuss the nature of governance and management at Harare Polytechnic. This approach is supported by Bargh *et al.* (1992) who argued that in order to understand the complexities of educational organisations, it is useful to explore the nature of governance since most of the things depend on the framework for governance and accountability that is in place.

### 6.3 Nature of Governance and Management

In the two previous chapters and in the literature review chapter I explained that all government technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe are governed through the Manpower Planning and Development Act Number 24 of 1994. The same Act covers Harare Polytechnic. Also the Audit and Exchequer Act applies to all government technical and vocational colleges in terms of provisions for administration of finance and control of assets by principals, acting on behalf of the permanent secretary in head office.

The level of accountability and the powers of the principal who runs Harare Polytechnic are to some extent different from those who manage other institutions. His/her position, in terms of Public Service grading system, is relatively higher (grade one) and equivalent to the director of manpower planning and development in head office. This level places the principal in a position where he/she can choose to report to the director in head office or report directly to the permanent secretary while the rest of the principals are reporting to the director.

Theoretically, this may sound simple and less problematic. However, various writers (Hanson 1985, Van der Westhuizen 1991, Becher and Kogan 1992, Garrett 1997) have warned that in management practices in which the unit of command is broken and the system allows an approach where one reports to more than one 'boss', problems of accountability, division of work and unit of purpose, are likely to emerge in all sorts of forms. Later in this chapter, issues impinging on the effectiveness of governance and management will be analysed and discussed from the interview responses provided.

By virtue of his higher status the principal of Harare Polytechnic is empowered to hire his/her own lecturers, instructors and supportive staff without referring to head office. In this situation, the role of head office is simply to endorse the documents and transmit them to the Public Service Commission for approval. According to Davies and Ellison (1997) the head who hires his/her own lecturing/teaching staff is likely to establish his/her authority on that staff on the basis that they can identify top management with the principal who got them into the system, hence the feeling that they are socially obliged to be responsible to him/her.

In situations where members of staff are recruited by head office, Davies and Ellison (1997) argued that the staff might feel in some sense that they are responsible to head office or even to some external body. This clearly supports the notion of a manager recruiting his/her own staff on the premise that the manager can set his/her own selection performance standards which are easily related to job application. This may have the advantage of easily identifying individual development needs and matching them with specific training strategies required by management.

As discussed in chapter four, the principal of a technical and vocational college can utilise the provisions contained in the Manpower Planning and Development Act, Number 24 of 1994, to establish a college advisory council as an instrument for maintaining external efficiency. In the case of Harare Polytechnic, college annual reports and minutes of management meetings showed the existence and participation of the college advisory council in the governance system of the institution.

Even though the principal of Harare Polytechnic may have certain powers by virtue of his/her higher position in the ministry, he/she will still need to link and collaborate with head office. This could also mean receiving certain policy directives from head office as the 'responsible authority'. It was further observed that the permanent secretary being the accounting officer, as stipulated in the Audit and Exchequer Act of Zimbabwe, must exercise financial controls over income and expenditure of government budgets for institutions such as Harare Polytechnic.

This is done through the director's office in head office and through the accounts section in head office, on behalf of the permanent secretary. On a daily basis, the management and monitoring of finance is done by the principal at the college level, who acts on behalf of the permanent secretary and is designated the sub-accounting officer, in terms of the Audit and Exchequer Act.

In the literature review chapter, it has been illustrated by Roe and Drake (1980) and supported by Sergiovanni (1991) that the effectiveness of a college will undoubtedly be influenced by the way in which decisions are made, accounted for and explained by the

principal as the manager. In the case of Harare Polytechnic, this view suggests the essence in this research of examining the principal's profile, his/her vision and his/her perceptions of the major responsibilities, problems and challenges confronting him/her, within college governance and management.

#### 6.4 Brief Profile of the Principal

Before becoming the principal of Harare Polytechnic, Mr Grey Chivanda had been at head office in the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology since the creation of that ministry in 1988. (The establishment of the ministry was as a result of a cabinet reshuffle and ministerial restructuring exercise). In head office, Mr Chivanda was the chief education officer responsible for, among other things, planning and building institutions, policy-making processes, introduction of new projects and relations with the donor community.

Mr Chivanda indicated to me that he was an educationalist who had started his career as a secondary school teacher at an all-black government school (Goromonzi) where he had risen to become the deputy headmaster. He was then promoted to head office's planning division in the Ministry of Education (ministry which caters for secondary and primary education) where he rose through the ranks to become a deputy chief education until his transfer on promotion to the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology. His total period in doing head office work in the two ministries and in the offices of educational planning, amounts to seventeen (17) years. From my interview with Mr Chivanda it was evident that the principal must

have had considerable experience in the area of educational planning. He said:

I was very active in the expansion of the education system at the primary and secondary level. We kept the school mapping, deciding where to put the schools, how they should be built, supporting the rural community and urban communities with professional advice, evaluations, mobilisation of resources, until my transfer to Higher Education Ministry.

Asked how he became Principal of Harare Polytechnic Mr Chivanda was quick to point out that he was still relatively new to the position having been appointed in January 1998 (eight months before the interview). According to him, he was appointed as a result of a sloop transfer with the former principal who was moved to head office to occupy Mr Chivanda's post.

The movement had been initiated by the permanent secretary following the former principal's health condition as someone who was slowly recovering from a hypertension related stroke (coronary thrombosis). Mr Chivanda indicated: "It was felt that it would be easier for the former principal if he worked from another office in head office rather than from an office at a bigger institution".

This dimension of a "sloop transfer" initiated by head office, is in line with the notion advanced by Vecchio (1997) which advocates for systems like head office to avoid being too bureaucratic to the extent of becoming unresponsive and impersonal to both structures and people that make the organisation effective. In a way it could also be inferred that Mr Chivanda had been given 'a vote of confidence' by

head office as a result of his posting to the largest and most diverse technical and vocational institution in the country.

According to Roe and Drake (1980:26) the principal of a complex college should be equipped with human skills as contrasted with technical skills which emphasise working with things. He/she should also be equipped with conceptual skills for recognising the interdependency of the various organisational functions, as contrasted with administrative skills for running routine procedures and for maintenance of status quo. Sergiovanni (1991:12) added that the demands for a principal who is running a diverse and complex institution, require "interpretative and personal reflection". According to studies of principalship by Sergiovanni (1991) those demands can be enhanced by principal learning more about their theories and practices.

Having examined the background of the principal of Harare Polytechnic and the job demands associated with a complex college, one issue that remains to be addressed later in this chapter is whether or not the principal fits into this complex system. Roe and Drake (1980:22) have argued that whilst the principal occupies a specified management role, that role is shaped through interaction with the various elements of the social system.

At the same time, he/she shapes that role too by his/her needs, drives, talents and training or capacities that he/she may have. This conception is supported by Senge (1990) who suggests the need to recognise people's interdependence and collective thinking in organisational effectiveness. The responses of the principal of Harare Polytechnic will provide us with a better understanding of how the system is surviving under his management, under

conditions of interdependence with external forces and 'collective thinking' with head office.

## 6.5 Analysis of the Principal's Interview Responses

In this section, responses of Mr Chivanda to the in-depth interview questions will be presented, analysed and discussed. Also I shall analyse and discuss his understanding of his management role and those significant problems associated with governance of the polytechnic. In this context of governance, the principal's responses will be examined in the light of the attitudes and perceptions of head office and the private sector, as key players in governance. In this section, sub-headings will be formulated on the basis of repeated themes and major issues and concerns highlighted by the principal in his responses to open-ended questions.

### 6.5.1 Principal's Key Role: Planning and Checking on College Systems

As shown and discussed in the literature review chapter, the manager's perceptions of his/her role determine how well he/she fits into the organisation and how effective he/she is able to mediate between the expectations of stakeholders and the mission of the organisation.

Asked to explain his own understanding of his role as principal of Harare Polytechnic, his views were:



I should be a leader among colleagues and a manager as well. I see myself as someone who should look at the college as a whole in all its aspects and try to assist in defining what the college wants to do, what it wants to achieve and how it wants to achieve it. I think I should be involved in ensuring that some ideas are being hatched and that these ideas match what the country wants to achieve in terms of what ministry has agreed as the most important activities of the college.

In further explaining his job and how he was executing his duties and responsibilities, Mr Chivanda emphasised the issue of planning as the most critical aspect of his job. According to him:

I definitely have seen the importance of planning in the sense of bringing about an atmosphere in which we can hatch, evolve strategies, evolve objectives and ensure also that the rest of the college through the heads of departments and divisions are doing the same at their own level. I am in charge of the systems that prevail ... and I see one of my important duties as ensuring that systems are put into practice and are effective.

In his management role, it seems that Mr Chivanda is emphasising organisational aims and structures. Bush (1995:25) has warned that in educational management it is essential to recognise the “two dimensions” of both people and structures. While structures tend to focus on aims, plans and individuals being defined by their roles, the focus on people appears to influence behaviour and performance. Bush (1995) is not alone on this notion. Senge’s (1990) emphasis is on people. His work on the “Five Learning Disciplines” advocates, among other things, a shared vision as a strong management approach that can build a sense of commitment in people, as they build images of the future that they seek to create and the guiding practices by which they hope to get there. This notion is based on

the premise that structures will come naturally when people have been mobilised to have common goals. As such, processes which in themselves involve people, should yield the formation of appropriate structures when all the people are aware of their goals and clear about the processes. Further responses of the interview with Mr Chivanda will shed more light into this issue of “structure versus people”, as I interpret the principal’s management role and practice later in this chapter.

### 6.5.2 Managing Change through Research

In literature, research appears to have always assumed an important role in educational management. To what extent principals as managers of technical and vocational institutions in Southern Africa do use research is a subject for debate.

In Africa, Namaddu (1991) has made a case for management systems in education to use evaluation research in order to introduce and assess changes or content research to analyse systems and in cases of specific educational problems, action research to introduce modifications directly into practice. Within the purview of educational governance at the national level, Mambo (1992) in Zimbabwe has effectively used research in order to determine the implementation feasibility of the policy on vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe. This was action research geared towards finding solutions to the management of curriculum policy issues. At Harare Polytechnic, Mr Chivanda believes in the role of research for planning purposes and in order to diagnose educational systems under his management dispensation. He also uses research to assess performance problems at the institution. According to him:

What I have done ... since my arrival here is to commission a small study, a research into factors that affect the performance of Harare Polytechnic. It is in the process of being completed. It is a study being undertaken by lecturers from here, it's an interdepartmental team and the real purpose is to give us the insight into what factors influence the way we perform as an institution. That way ... and on the basis that this is not my own information, we can implement change with minimum resistance. You need something to convince your people. This is through questionnaires, interviews and observations. Do the people see the need for change? Are they convinced that the basis for change is credible?

Mr Chivanda uses some form of participatory action research, if we go by Smither's (1994) conception that action research involves three processes, namely data collection, feedback of data to client and action planning based on the data. In cases where individuals who are responsible for the situation make the diagnosis and take action, participant action research occurs.

In essence, action research focuses on solutions and is according to Beckhard (1969) cited in Smither (1994:268), almost always aimed at achieving concrete results that bring about change. According to Drucker (1977) we live with change, society constantly rearranges itself, its worldview and its basic values. Given this observation, this could mean that educational management should be at the forefront of society's attempts to come to terms with new realities. As Garrett (1997) cited in Davies and Ellison (1997:96) observed, principals as change managers in the knowledge industry should be aware of the desirability and predictability in individual approaches to the change process. The principal of Harare Polytechnic is involving his staff and using scientific research in the change process.

Change could mean stepping out of a position where you feel confident, where you know the rules into a position of uncertainty about relationships, performance levels of subordinates, their roles and responsibilities. Mr Chivanda's acceptance of the position and his recognition of principalship as a challenge from his familiar head office job could be regarded in a sense as an indication of his readiness to manage change. In such a situation Morgan (1986) warns that change managers must initially have a firm understanding of the organisation, hence the use of research. As Garrett (1997) observed, change could mean moving from a "firm ground to a swampy ground".

In the case of Harare Polytechnic, Mr Chivanda appears to be placing himself in a state of readiness for managing change, as he adopts an action research approach.

### 6.5.3 Managing the Teaching and Learning Process through a Board of Studies

Harare Polytechnic has a Board of Studies composed of heads of divisions. The prime responsibility of the Board is, according to the principal, ... "to set the overall direction and policies regarding courses and curriculum issues". The board approves and agrees on systems which can make teaching and learning effective, the ordering of the teaching materials, the supervision of staff and the enrolment of students. The principal as the chairperson is happy with the way the board is operating in terms of its effectiveness.

Within the overall structures of the college, various committees are in place such as production committee, graduation committee,

sports and finance. Chairpersons of all those committees report to the Board of Studies which is the supreme board chaired by the principal. According to him:

The board of studies is a very important structure that I found in place. It meets monthly and I do think it is an effective way of supervising the teaching and learning process.

Asked if this board has any links with the industrial sector, the principal indicated that the college had a permanent member of staff (lecturer) engaged as the industrial liaison officer. The officer is a member of the board of studies and he/she briefs the board on matters of placing and attaching students for on-job training in industry. Serious issues of matching the college curriculum to industrial skills proficiency demands rest with the college advisory council and other departmental advisory committees. The board of studies therefore, deals with the internal efficiency matters regarding the teaching and learning process. Such management arrangements are encouraged by various vocational and technical education theorists (Verma 1990, Psacharopoulos 1991, Middleton *et al.* 1993, Van Vught 1993, Charlton *et al.* 1995) as think-tank meetings for shaping and re-shaping educational programmes through collective wisdom.

#### 6.5.4 Managing the Relationship and Interaction with the Private Industrial Sector

According to certain legislative provisions previously referred to and contained in the Manpower Planning and Development Act, the relationship between the private industrial sector and Harar e Polytechnic is officially linked through a college advisory council.

This scenario applies to all technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe as shown and discussed in the literature review chapter. In the case of Harare Polytechnic, documentary sources in the form of minutes and annual reports showed that the relationship was active and useful. The principal's views on the college advisory council were:

The times that we have met with members of the college advisory council and its chairperson, they have shown me a certain keenness to participate and advise me and the college. My attitude has been to be as open with them as possible. I have deliberately refrained from making any judgement about advice until I have allowed them to explain themselves fully so that I can get their ideas.

The principal further revealed that at some stage there were communication problems in the notification of meetings with the result that "one or two" meetings were aborted.

The cause of the problem, according to the principal, was a lack of sufficient advance notice for meetings. Nonetheless, this had since been corrected by the principal himself and at the time of conducting fieldwork for this research report, meetings had become regular and attendance had normalised.

Middleton *et al.* (1993) have observed that the relationship between a technical or vocational college and industry is unavoidable but delicate and complex. In managing complex relationships and diversity, Morgan (1986) warned that the manager must develop a sense of self-awareness in his strategies and reflection in those action steps that form the core value of the organisation. In promptly solving the communication problem affecting meetings of

the college advisory council, it seems to me that Mr Chivanda is not only reflecting on his own strategies but creating some sense of motivation to council members to attend meetings accordingly.

#### 6.5.5 Managing a Difficult Relationship with Head Office

The principal's comments on his relationship with head office showed that there are imposed systems which have been passed over the years and are rather difficult to shake within head office itself.

Whereas the permanent secretary's attitude is on decentralising power to the principal, staff under him in head office appeared somewhat difficult in their dealings with the principal.

Mr Chivanda indicated:

One difference I found is that where the permanent secretary tends to acknowledge ... that I have the responsibility which I should carry on my own, some of his junior staff are not so keen to let go. They tend to be more official... even the language they use. I had to tell one of them to be more civilised. I accept it is a difficult relationship.

The principal admitted that the relationship with head office was rather difficult because of what appeared to be an authoritarian attitude reflected in the manner in which head office staff were communicating with heads of institutions. That kind of interdependency and collaboration that is critical in what Kreitner (1986:169) observes as synergistic relationships appeared to be difficult between the principal and junior staff in head office. Beer *et al.* (1990) have warned that such difficult relationships may affect

sharing information and accountability between central office and station office, thus creating inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the organisational system.

One of the major concerns that was causing some hostility between head office staff and principals of technical and vocational colleges, was according to Mr Chivanda, “the issue of head office telling you who to invite as a guest speaker on your college’s prize-giving or graduation day”.

Principals had their own ideas about guest speakers. Their identification of speakers was based on their specific needs and future goals. In the case of Harare Polytechnic, the principal felt that this was a matter for the board of studies and not for head office. He further expressed the feeling that head office should concentrate on clarifying policy “in the direction of the ministry”. Mr Chivanda stated:

I have a feeling that they don’t do as much as they should in terms of clarifying policy. There are certain grey areas which seem to remain grey for too long.

Asked about his interaction if any and his relationship with the permanent secretary, in the context of his relatively higher position since his grade was just one notch below the permanent secretary grading level, Mr Chivanda was firm to highlight the positiveness of the relationship. He stated:

The permanent secretary is extremely supportive. His attitude is that I should do as much as possible on my own. He hardly phones me unless it’s extremely necessary. When I came here I was



actually surprised by the amount of time and latitude left to me to deal with the institution. I also noticed that he wanted to tell his officers to let go on it.

To the principal head office is in a way obstructive. He perceives himself as the manager in-charge and in control of the system. He is creating an agenda for the polytechnic. In such a situation Van der Westhuizen (1991) suggests that the pre-occupation of central head offices is to make sense of the needs of the colleges under their responsibility and provide support and guidance.

He is not alone on this notion. Various theorists (Sergiovanni *et al.* 1999, Fidler 1997, Smither 1994, Dalin 1998) have written about the effectiveness of an educational organisation through harmonising motivation of individuals with interdependent structures and institutional expectations. According to Hoy and Miskel (1991) outcomes of an institution can only match expectations if the governance system is well co-ordinated within the external conditions in which the institution operates. A possible solution suggested by Mr Chivanda was, "the need for the principals to have more autonomy than we have".

#### 6.5.6 Dealing with Conflicts through Laid Down Procedures and Rules

The principal admitted that the majority of his teaching staff were highly committed and well organised and in particular, heads of departments. When conflicts arose, the principal referred to government laid down disciplinary procedures and rules for solving or dealing with cases of conflicts. According to documentar y

sources, this approach appeared to be working theoretically when the issues involving staff were concerned. In dealing with students, it was difficult for me to establish if that same approach was yielding any favourable or expected results.

At the time of my visit to the institution to collect data, there were no lessons taking place (for 4 weeks) since the college had been closed down as a result of strike action by students. The principal stated:

Students are away as a result of a strike. Harare Polytechnic is one of the most militant colleges and very hostile in national students politics. So I closed the college in consultation with the ministry. They (students) would like to blame me for everything that has gone wrong ... but I feel that they must also learn and choose what they want. If they want to learn they must know that they are partly responsible for creating conditions in which they can learn. And I want to help them do that.

College annual reports that I examined showed that the college students go to the streets for strike action at least two or three times in a year. The trend has been like that during the past eight years. According to Hanson (1985:362) such cycle of events based on tensions can create crisis management which, in the end, requires well thought out problem-solving processes. Three members of staff that I spoke to separately indicated that perhaps the polytechnic did not have a clear set of values.

As one member of staff put it, "a climate of harmony between college management and students does not seem to exist so when things go wrong even at government or political level, students will riot".

As I spoke to the principal, he appeared visibly tired. He seemed to be going through what Mintzberg (1980) described as mediating tensions with organisational goals. In his own words he stated:

This afternoon at 3.30 pm I will be accompanied by my lawyer to the high court because the students are challenging my powers to close sections of the school. The regulations (Statutory Instrument Number 110 of 1979 governing the administration of the welfare of students in technical and vocational colleges) are old going back to 1979. They clearly give me the responsibility but it is not clear whether they give me the power at all. I am convinced that the regulations must be revised to give the principal more discretion and to broaden the kind of action we can take.

The feeling of the principal was that issues of human rights, the right to demonstrate and express oneself were the order of the day in the 'new Zimbabwe'. According to him, certain powers of the principal and indeed of the ministry were being compromised due to a lack of revision of the regulations.

Asked if students were being involved at some forum in the management of their affairs, the principal indicated that the Students Representative Council (SRC) as the supreme students body, was participating in the management of sports. He nonetheless confirmed that the SRC were asking for meetings with the principal and with the board of studies, for at least once per term. Mr Chivanda stated:

They have asked for meetings ... and to be involved in the administration and in the management and decision-making processes but we told them that decision-making has many

levels. You can't be everywhere. But now we have found those meetings extremely useful.

Huysamen (1996:22) observed that in situations where managers were relatively new as is the case at Harare Polytechnic, conflicts could be avoided or prevented or even minimised by re-humanising the organisation through some form of transformation. According to him, this involves "culture track, team-building track, strategy-structure track and reward track". Using this track model, the tracks must be followed in the correct sequence and when everyone is on board restructuring will stand a good chance of success. Roe and Drake (1980) have also warned that where students and management have problems, there has to be a distinction between involvement and participation. According to this notion participation rather than mere involvement or "cover-up" involvement or using an iron fist, can only make students feel part of the larger school family.

As Sergiovanni (1991) put it, the school is there for them first and foremost. They therefore deserve to be recognised by management. In this debate the management of the polytechnic may need to take note of Hanson's (1985) warning that instead of treating symptoms of problems and conflicts they must spend some time finding the root causes. Through some deliberate effort of forging participation and communication between the polytechnic management and students, issues could perhaps be better solved rather than relying solely on laid-down procedures and regulations.

### 6.5.7 Managing College Funds in Rising Inflation

It has been mentioned in some literature (King 1986, World Bank 1988, Middleton *et al.* 1993) on programmes for technical and vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa that Zimbabwe, among other countries, is advantaged in financing technical and vocational education. This is based on the premise that the government has traditionally had a levy system enforceable on employers (based on 1% of employers' wage bill) whose funds are used to supplement government financing efforts and obligations. The fund adds to the total budget for technical and vocational colleges by something in the region of 16 to 18 million Zimbabwean dollars per year (figures supplied by Dr Mambo, 22 June 1998) over and above what colleges get from government voted funds.

Given this financing provision the principal of Harare Polytechnic expressed the feeling that on the ground, the money was not sufficiently meeting the demands of the college. He admitted though that the college was getting "double funding" from ZIMDEF and from government voted funds. In his words:

We are tending to be getting more ZIMDEF funds for equipment, maintenance and consumables as well as getting money from government votes. The problem is that the economy of the country can no longer support us unless we decrease the enrolment yet government is saying the enrolment capacity should remain or even increase. In terms of nominal figures it sounds okay. But at the current rate of inflation, how do you buy food and equipment for students when prices are rising all the time? There is no stability in the value of the currency.

Despite the established levy's pool of financing and topping up funds for colleges such as Harare Polytechnic the trends were somewhat difficult to predict. According to the principal, indications made by the chief executive officer in charge of administering ZIMDEF at the past NAMACO conference (September 1997) were that companies were closing down due to national economic problems and the drastic devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar against all major foreign currencies. This in turn affected the levy system to the extent that figures were taking a downward trend in the past four years. That situation was subsequently creating fears among principals of technical and vocational colleges. Mr Chivanda admitted that he was facing a major problem of running the biggest technical and vocational college with limited financial resources during a period of 'unfavourable economies of scale'.

Niemann (1991) cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991:173) has observed that one of the most difficult tasks of a principal in school administration is to set up a system of planning expenditure in order to achieve educational objectives within a specific given period. At the same time, constructive ways towards preventing the disruption of the teaching and learning activities as a result of insufficient or exhausted resources must be carefully planned. Sergiovanni (1991) argued that the principal should set up some kind of financial policy just as much as he formulates a cultural policy for the college or his personal policy, as the figurehead.

Given this situation of managing finances in the wake of rising costs exacerbated by a relatively higher inflation rate (58% by July 1999, according to Zimbabwe's Statistical Digest), the principal of Harare Polytechnic must manage his funds as determined by his budgetary priorities, both in the short and in the long term. In such cases, Roe

and Drake (1980) have warned that some financial problems could arise which cannot be determined beforehand and if this happens, the principal should strive to ensure that all core activities of the institution are working together to achieve the minimum required for the common goal or mission.

In the case of Harare Polytechnic, the mission is effective technical and vocational education for employability and “in order to meet the ever-changing manpower needs of commerce and industry”. Amidst budgetary constraints, this mission will need constant reflection and revisiting by the principal, as suggested by Roe and Drake (1980).

## 6.6 Analysis of the Industrialist Interview Responses

The chairperson of the college advisory council for Harare Polytechnic, Mr Lawrence Gudza, agreed to share with me his experiences in dealing with the polytechnic from the point of view of an industrialist representing the wider circle of employers in commerce and industry who are major stakeholders of the institution. As Middleton *et al.* (1993) have asserted the value of the skills acquired by individual learners in technical and vocational education is set by the labour market.

In practical terms, this means that the college's activities should to a large extent, reflect the manpower realities of the surrounding industrial sector, hence the need for effective linkages and communication between the college and the industrial sector. Mr Gudza, a professional computer scientist by training, running his own company, believes that Harare Polytechnic has a crucial role in

producing the much needed competent skilled workers for the ever - changing demands of commerce and industry.

At this point, I present and discuss responses of the industrialist to the open-ended questions regarding his relationship with the polytechnic. Issues will be analysed and discussed in respect of Mr Gudza's observations and perceptions about the effectiveness of the institution vis-à-vis decisions and actions of key players in governance namely, the principal, head office senior management and the advisory council itself.

#### 6.6.1 Dealing with a College Losing its "Return on Investment".

Asked about his views on the effectiveness of Harare Polytechnic as the supplier of skills to the major city's industrial sector, Mr Gudza expressed dissatisfaction and doubts about the effectiveness of training programmes. According to him technical and vocational programmes were deteriorating. He further explained:

Of late the concern of the college advisory council which I believe is a concern shared by staff at the polytechnic is the policy for equipping this college. The policy to enhance technological base on which students should be trained for them to be useful in industry has been lacking for some time now at this polytechnic.

Regrettably, our students are using antiquated equipment and this will therefore make our graduates unemployable because their skills are not relevant.



Mr Gudza expressed concern that the equipment and the machinery in the engineering and technological fields were “very old” and needed replacement.

According to him, college management had repeatedly blamed the ministry’s head office for its lack of responsiveness in adequately providing sufficient financial resources to the polytechnic. Drawing from his experience in the advisory council, Mr Gudza explained that the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology had in the past put the blame on the Ministry of Finance and on ZIMDEF (a parastatal organisation under the dispensation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology), for repeatedly reducing budgetary allocations to the polytechnic.

Another major area of concern raised by industrialists through the advisory council was the issue of staffing for the college. Industrialists felt that apart from losing experienced staff, college management and the ministry needed to consider seriously the establishment of systematic staff development programmes in the wake of changing technologies.

Mr Gudza explained:

We have lost very valuable members of staff because of bad conditions of employment within this college.

As an advisory council, we have repeatedly alerted the ministry through the principal that ways have to be found in which we should make the environment here more conducive to retaining good skilled lecturers. We also believe that there should be continuous education for our lecturers. We understand that resources are limited but

there could be exchange programmes arranged with other countries through donor funding or even with commerce and industry.

Sentiments expressed by Mr Gudza were confirmed in the minutes of the meetings between college management and college advisory council on three separate occasions, within a two-year period. Industrialists felt that college lecturers needed to share learning experiences with colleagues in the same setting but from other countries. Such systems are supported by Charlton *et al.* (1995) as having reciprocal benefits to both parties in the light of the increasing global information economy influencing technical and vocational programmes. According to Mr Gudza:

That doesn't end there. Our lecturers will probably find that new equipment, new teaching methods taught in a changing environment of business and business is not static. Our economy in terms of our productive sector is competitive so our graduates must work in an environment that is familiar to their training environment. Harare Polytechnic must therefore be properly equipped with modern technology and with highly skilled staff if we are to fill that gap of skills requirement.

Asked about the effectiveness of the meetings with college management, Mr Gudza indicated that the meetings provided an added dimension to the concept of merely advising.

According to him the meetings served as a tool for injecting that "dynamic business philosophy to college management". As business people they were bent on influencing college management to think in business terms in their maneuvering of college administrative tasks. In this regard, the industrialist felt strongly that the college was

losing its return on investment by spending a lot and ultimately producing not quite the right product.

Corwin (1974) cited in Hanson (1985: 8) has warned that a college operating within the governance of a natural social system model, can have its official goals distorted or neglected as the organisation strains to survive. Governance of Harare Polytechnic according to this model appears to be a coalition of sub-groups encompassing ZIMDEF, head office, Ministry of Finance and the Private industrial sector. The polytechnic as an institution is an open system as shown and discussed in chapter two, but it is, according to this model, operating within the governance of a natural social system model. Its goals can therefore be distorted by the unavoidable coalition of sub-groups.

Its effectiveness will need a manager whose principalship recognises what Mintzberg (1989) described as a “negotiator role”. This requires special negotiating skills for resource trading and mobilisation with a view to bringing about acceptable solutions to the needs of individuals and to the requirements of the organisation, in a complex system such as Harare Polytechnic.

### 6.6.2 Advising in a Desperate Relationship

The college advisory council and its departmental advisory committees (sub-committees) seem to be well established at Harare Polytechnic. Academic departments sit with departmental advisory committees at their levels once or twice per term. Despite this interaction, the chairperson of the college advisory council gave the

impression that much of the advice is not taken seriously by the college or the ministry. In his own words:

It's a very desperate relationship between two ... totally helpless bodies. We cry on each other's shoulders without necessarily achieving what I believe should be achieved in that relationship. What I am saying here is that there is a very good rapport between the college advisory council and the principal and certainly with all members of staff. As council we also meet heads of departments and we talk about curriculum changes but if the policy is not responding to better equipmentation, better staff conditions and staff development, what can we do? Perhaps more powers have to be given to the principal.

Mr Gudza also indicated that transport was a big problem facing the polytechnic. Transport was required by lecturing staff who had to follow-up students on industrial attachment. Documentary sources confirmed Mr Gudza's concerns about transport. Annual reports of 1996 and 1997 revealed that monetary provisions for transport had been reduced drastically by head office with the result that the polytechnic was unable to carry out its planned visits to industrial work-places.

Another major area that the chairperson of the college advisory council had raised in meetings on various occasions, related to the library issue. The college had expanded to an enrolment capacity exceeding 6000 students over the past ten years yet the library was small and un-proportional to the student capacity, having been established in the 70s and for a much smaller student population. According to Mr Gudza, students were failing to have the appropriate access to reference materials, let alone reading space. Mr Gudza indicated that the situation was rather disturbing if one considers

the fact that the library is a key supportive system to the core business of teaching and learning. According to the industrialist, this affected the quality of “products being produced by the polytechnic”. He further stated:

The ministry needs to review the quality of the student who leaves this college in terms of his readiness to fit in society and to enter the job market. I think in this whole area of college governance we can only see improvements if the policies that govern the principals are changed in order to empower them and make them accountable to the industry, to the students and to the ministry. So I'm not satisfied generally with the way the college is run. I believe there is a lot of room for improvement, in terms of the quality of students that are coming out of here.

As I was talking to the chairperson of the college advisory council, I could observe an element of his keenness to interact with the polytechnic management and make things happen. At the same time, he seemed aware of the council's limitations and the college's helpless situation. It seems that the art of organisational effectiveness lies in the ability to read the situation and influence change.

In the case of Harare Polytechnic Mr Gudza seems to be reading the situation. His interaction with the college may influence change. Even if the change is rather slow to come, there is still a sense of trust and support between the college advisory council and the college management.

Both parties may need to take the advice of Louis and Miles (1990) cited in Davies and Ellison (1997:103) that if the environment both inside and outside is rather chaotic, plans will not last due to

disagreements hence, the need to adopt the evolutionary perspective to change. This means that key players in management must just forge ahead and act, thereafter a shared vision will emerge from the action rather than wait. Fullan (1993) supports this model in the context of a turbulent environment, since, according to him, change evolves from a felt need rather than from some theoretical strategic plan. Harare Polytechnic's management and its college advisory council may need to learn from this notion in their desperate relationship.

### 6.7 Analysis of Head Office's Interview Responses

In this section, three senior management officials from the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology are representing head office. These are: the Permanent Secretary, Dr Mambo, the Acting Director of Manpower Planning and Development, Mr Munetsi and the Chief Internal Auditor in the Ministry, Mr Munatsi. Their views and perceptions are presented, analysed and discussed within the context of governance and management of Harare Polytechnic.

At the time of conducting fieldwork aimed at data gathering, the Acting Director of Manpower Planning indicated that Harare Polytechnic's management had a higher degree of latitude and some autonomy which other colleges did not enjoy in two areas, namely, manpower planning and recruitment and financial control and management. This was because of the higher status of the principal whose grading was on par with the directors in head office. Given that unique situation, I felt it would be appropriate to include the chief auditor in head office as a participant in this research. His job among other things, involves auditing colleges on manpower

utilisation, control of government assets and financial management. As Sergiovanni (1991) observed, the attitude of key players in school governance is of strategic importance for creating a favourable organisational climate.

#### 6.7.1 Interaction in a “Let’s Wait and See” Situation

Asked what his perceptions were on Harare Polytechnic within the context of effectiveness and efficiency of the system, the permanent secretary indicated:

The polytechnic is a very big institution. When the first black principal was there things were relatively okay. But now and in the last four years or so we have had lots of confrontations with students. If we put it in general terms we have serious problems in the management of some of the colleges. Poly, well let’s wait and see.

The view that there were “serious problems in the management of some of the colleges” was supported by the chief internal auditor.

He went on to explain that from the audit point of view, the polytechnic had not done well in all the three areas of manpower utilisation, assets control and financial management. He asserted that “principals are not financial people although they have a major financial responsibility”. He acknowledged that the principal of the polytechnic had “lots of discretion” compared to principals of other technical and vocational colleges. According to my analysis of the legal framework governing the polytechnic, it was evident that Harare

Polytechnic was governed by the same Treasury Instructions, Public Service Regulations that are issued from time to time.

This was confirmed by the chief auditor, Mr Munatsi. The chief auditor further explained:

The problem with Harare Polytechnic was that the interpretation of these government financial regulations lied with the permanent secretary who should be consulted for clarification from time to time. The Polytechnic was not consulting maybe because the college employs senior finance people who are supposed to advise the principal. The college has a registrar and a senior accountant unlike other colleges which have only a bursar and an executive officer yet there are serious financial management problems at the polytechnic.

The acting director of manpower planning and development, expressed the view that the principal was “relatively new having been in the position for approximately 10 months”. According to Mr Munetsi:

Let’s wait and see, let us give the man a chance to prove his management effectiveness.

These days all principals are attending a financial management training workshop for non-financial managers. That might improve things. In any case the principal at the polytechnic has more latitude and power to get on with decision-making issues.

As I talked to the senior management staff in head office, I got the sense that the former principal of Harare Polytechnic (previously



referred to as the first black principal) had been sick for almost two years as a result of a stress-related stroke.

This eventually resulted in the decision to move him to head office as earlier stated by Mr Chivanda. It could therefore be inferred that perhaps the demands of the job and the governance climate compounded by students' unrest were key issues that the principal had to come to terms with. Handy (1996:67) talked about role conflict as a collection of roles that do not precisely fit and role overload where roles are too much for one person. According to him, the combination of role conflict and role overload can result in role stress.

On the same subject, Roe and Drake (1980) have advanced the notion of role incompatibility as a result of role ambiguity. In role incompatibility, there is a clash between other people's expectations of one's role and one's own self-concept, as discussed in the literature review chapter. The case of Harare Polytechnic tends to point towards both role stress and role incompatibility.

Within the purview of role incompatibility, head office expects certain goals to be fulfilled and assumes that the principal as the manager of the polytechnic has the "latitude, power and discretion" to get on with management decisions when the principal on the other hand, may feel powerless and legally ill-equipped to handle some of those critical decisions.

Handy (1996) made a distinction of resource power, position power and expert power. According to his assertion, the most influential power in organisational effectiveness is resource power since there must be control of resources which determine the inputs of a system.

The principal has resource power to the extent that he/she can give promotion to his staff or provide better diet to his students or provide modern equipment for the teaching and learning system. In this picture of Harare Polytechnic, it seems that the bureaucratisation system of central control by head office, appears to have taken the resource power from the principal despite his higher status.

As head office adopts the “lets wait and see” approach, teaching and learning must continue to take place at the polytechnic. The principal in the final analysis must grapple with reconciling organisational goals with expectations of the private industrial sector and those of head office.

#### 6.8 Analysis of Documentary Sources

The need for cross-validation of evidence through triangulation of data gathering techniques and varied respondents was suggested by Merriam (1988) and discussed in chapter three. I continue to use this approach as a way of strengthening the research findings and obtaining a holistic view, in this complex scenario of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges. In the light of this approach, this section will focus on documentary sources in the form of annual reports, policy documents, minutes of meetings and media reports on Harare Polytechnic. Relations between different kinds of responses will be noted where necessary. Comparisons will be made and evidence weighted against data collected through interviews and observations.

At the time of data gathering it was not possible to talk to lecturing staff and students since the college was closed as a result of disturbances and riots by students. In order to capture some of their feelings, it was necessary to review information from the national press media in an effort to close the data-gathering gap. According to the *Sunday Mail* Newspaper, dated 23 June 1996, some lecturers at Harare Polytechnic, "called on the Ministry of Higher Education to appoint a board of enquiry to look into problems at the institution to ensure continuity of quality training".

The paper went on to say that lecturers who were speaking on conditions of anonymity had described themselves as a "demoralised and disillusioned lot". According to the same article, the lecturers had in the past complained to the relevant authorities but their pleas "had fallen on deaf ears". In response, the principal of the college at the time refuted all the allegations saying "the lecturers had not followed existing channels to air their grievances".

*The Herald* of 30 July 1996 (Tuesday), carried a story including a picture of the mess, damage and destruction of property that "some rowdy Harare Polytechnic students had caused outside the Herald House in George Silundika Avenue in Harare", as they were carrying out a strike action in the city centre. The strike action, according to the same newspaper, had been triggered by delays in the "payouts" of students' stipends. On 26 February 1997 (Wednesday), *The Herald* reported as follows:

Government has reinstated grants for over 30 000 Harare Polytechnic students which were withdrawn after last year's demonstrations, the Secretary for Higher Education, Mr Michael Mambo said yesterday (p.12).

According to the same article, these students were in the business studies department and had their grants withdrawn and their department briefly closed after demonstrating over delays by government to disburse the grants (stipends). College annual reports supplied to me confirmed that between January 1992 and August 1998, class boycotts and strike action had become a part of the ethos of Harare Polytechnic. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the principal during that period is what Etzioni (1961) cited in Sergiovanni (1991:55) described as “maintaining compliance”. His compliance theory demands the maintenance of involvement of students and connecting them to their goals in such a way that they are proud to identify and to be a part of their school.

According to this theory, people in governance and management can use coercive means or rewards in the form of trophies and prizes for quality achievement and responsible behaviour or normative means. The latter means that students find what they are doing to be intrinsically satisfying and they believe in that. The college could try to learn from this approach.

Summary highlights of issues and concerns contained in the 1997 college annual report stated among other things:

*Automotive Engineering* - The division has had problems in acquiring equipment which was ordered following the necessary tender formalities.

*Business Education* - The old manual typewriters have constantly broken down thus affecting training.

*Computer Studies* - Serious shortage of computer terminals, students have not had adequate time for practicals.

*Science Technology* - The department does not have up-to-date training equipment in its laboratories.

*Civil Engineering* - Laboratories need to be revamped with up-to-date equipment. There are serious shortages of lecturing staff in Architecture, Quantity Surveying and Valuation.

*Mass Communication* - The department needs desktop publishing equipment for its Print Journalism course.

*Library Information Science* - Shortage of classrooms, computers and lecturers.

*Mechanical Engineering* - Due to lack of equipment CAD/CAM courses have been run on borrowed laboratories from a sister college, Harare Institute of Technology.

Other major issues raised in the non-teaching department were; the need for a tractor for cutting grass, adequate funds for providing travelling operations needed to follow-up students and shortage of funds for college running costs. Some of these problems reflected on crisis management as opposed to strategic management. Kreitzer (1986:168) advanced the notion that managers who think strategically are able to envision their organisations in the context of environmental trends and important interdependencies.

This notion closely fits Dalin's (1998:100) "equilibrium paradigm" in the structure - functionalist theory in which managers of schools must recognise the essence of mutual dependence within the governance system. This implies that managers must carefully plan all the critical resources that a college or school needs in order to function.

In the process of planning, according to the "equilibrium paradigm", there has to be some balance "between the education changes which are drawn parallel to the biological theory of evolution", and the concern or awareness of how development conflicts with "amity" (friendly relations). In the case of Harare Polytechnic, this is only feasible if the principal is able to negotiate, convince and mobilise other systems and sectors within the arena of governance, for his much needed resources.

*The Herald* of 14 September 1998 reported the principal of Harare Polytechnic, Mr Chivanda stating that the college had re-opened after having closed down due to disturbances. According to the paper, the principal is further reported to have said:

We believe that people who will be coming back this term are those who are really interested in learning and should be prepared to stick to and respect college rules and regulations. Starting this term, students' activities would be closely monitored and any situation or problem would be dealt with decisively (*The Herald* 1998:8).

Media statements made by the principal reflect what I have in this chapter attempted to analyse as the question of "structures versus people". Empirical research carried out by Louis and Miles (1990, in Davies and Ellison 1997) on 178 upper secondary schools suggested

the notion that the most important variable for success in school management is the ability to develop trust and a relationship based on co-operation. Dalin (1998:116) supports this notion but observes that conflict resolution and communication could be solved through organisational diagnosis. According to Beer *et al.* (1990) the critical path to change and revitalise the organisation is to mobilise commitment to change through joint or collective diagnosis of problems. Reading through documentary sources, it became clear to me that Harare Polytechnic may need some organisational diagnosis. Suggestions along those lines will be discussed in depth, in the final chapter of this research.

### 6.9 Observations

In this section I present data gathered at Harare Polytechnic through observations. As pointed out in chapter three, I intend to get to understand the key people in governance and management of the institution in their everyday situation. I therefore had to observe naturally occurring behaviour of people at Harare Polytechnic. The information that I gathered will be useful in further cross-validating key issues raised through interviews and documentary sources. The data will be analysed and discussed with interpretations drawn in order to reach new meanings of governance and management at Harare Polytechnic.

As I entered the premises through the main gate, the security guard searched my car, recorded my name and asked the name of the person that I was visiting. I got the impression that there was generally tight security and even as I left the college I was subjected to a much more intensive 'ritual procedure' with screen mirrors

checking beneath my vehicle. The reception area was not manned but I could hear some laughter and people's voices in the background. I waited and waited until someone emerged and directed me to the principal's secretary. After my interview with the principal I was granted permission to walk around the college. I got the sense that here was a massive infrastructure whose buildings and grounds appeared not well taken care of at the time. Equipment and machinery were relatively old in most of the departments. To me there was a pleasant atmosphere displayed through facial expressions amongst non-teaching staff who appeared not to be busy. This could be explained by the absence of students and the stoppage of the teaching and learning processes.

Back in the administrative building, I could sense some elements of a laissez-faire attitude among some senior staff and in some cases, a lack of business approach and in other instances, a relaxed approach characterised by bureaucratic routine systems. Observations made do confirm some of those issues and concerns that were explained through documentary sources and raised through interview responses. Morgan (1986) has suggested that organisations must have the capacity to sense, monitor and scan significant aspects of their environment. This challenges the principal of Harare Polytechnic to establish proactive planning strategies and systems that can quickly provide corrective action to discrepancies. In a complex organisation such as a polytechnic, Smither (1994) advised the concept of process consultation in which management is taught to diagnose and solve its own problems.

The principal of Harare Polytechnic cannot divorce himself from the 'forces' of head office, industry, change, interdependency and students pressure groups. In these circumstances Kreitner (1986 )



suggested that the manager of a complex organisation forms synergistic relationships with those with 'resource power' and those who are able to influence the kind of system and climate that the manager is attempting to build.

### 6.10 Triangulation and Summary Findings

Various salient issues emerging from this section of the report are triangulated and confirmed. The system of governance and management is too bureaucratic and unresponsive to both structures and people. Government regulations, circulars and the principal's firm position were visible on notice boards and these confirmed the use of excessive bureaucracy and head office's authoritarian attitude. Interview responses of the principal highlighted this approach.

Minutes of college management meetings confirmed the industrialists' perspective of a system that is not responsive to the demands of the curricula as defined by industry. Also the interview responses of the principal confirmed head office's lack of responsiveness in providing sufficient resources. The college management's lack of creativity in generating funds using workshop production systems could be observed. No produced items for sale were displayed or mentioned by the ancillary staff that I met as they were manning the workshops and cleaning the equipment.

Mr Gudza's sentiments on a lack of staff development interventions to get staff to be exposed to industry during holidays and get acquainted with modern industrial technologies were all issues that were confirmed in minutes of college meetings 'on three separate

occasions'. Despite the stated mission statement of the college that it aimed at "responding to the ever -changing manpower needs of commerce and industry", interview responses of the chairman of the college advisory council confirmed that this was not taking place.

The chapter has provided a holistic case study of Harare Polytechnic within the context of governance and management, involving key players namely: the principal, the chairpersons of the college advisory council representing the industrialists, the chief auditor in head office, the acting director of manpower planning and development and the permanent secretary in the ministry. Relevant issues and concerns have been analysed and discussed. The chapter started with a review of the background and its enrolment data.

The principal of Harare Polytechnic, armed with "position power" is facing tremendous challenges in balancing his decision - making processes with some control from head office. In this case head office does possess what Dalin (1998) defined as resource power. Despite his latitude and higher status position in the system, there appears to be some role stress in the job coupled with role incompatibility, as a result of varied expectations by head office and by the private industrial sector.

The interaction between college management and the industrial private sector appears vibrant but does not seem to be producing any meaningful results. The organisational climate at the institution is "disturbed" according to Van der Westhuizen (1991) and riddled by problems of bureaucratic financial controls and limited funds. Compounding the problem is the issue of the higher status of the principal which appears to create a lack of clarity in accountability

and in the reporting structure, thus distorting the unit of command. Also there is a culture of student unrest at the polytechnic.

There are no visible signs that the teaching staff are motivated.

In this situation, both head office and college management will need to revisit their focus on structures, regulations and policies. They may need to reflect more on people in an effort to 're-humanise' the system if they have to produce highly skilled quality graduates through the polytechnic. Davies (1997) cited in Davies and Ellison (1997: 17) has advanced the notion that:

In re-engineering an educational organisation it is necessary to focus on processes not on structures. Typically a process crosses a number of organisational boundaries which include how the student is learning, how the teacher is teaching and the coherence and availability of resources.

Hammer and Champy (1993) warned that because educational management has borrowed from management of business and commerce, aspects such as re-engineering, should be carefully handled. In business re-engineering implies how work is done, how outputs are created from inputs whereas in education, one is dealing with people, hence it is a people oriented system rather than a process oriented.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA IN THE CASE STUDIES

#### 7.1 Introduction

As a relativist case study researcher I subscribe to Stake's (1988 : 254) belief that:

A case study that portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity is a precious discovery.

The three case studies of Westgate, Kweekwe and Harare Polytechnic were a "precious discovery". The value of interpretations of the case studies will vary relative to their 'credibility' and utility. According to Stake's (1995: 103) assertion, each reader should derive unique meanings from each case. As I mentioned in chapter three the whole research is a multiple case design. The three case studies which are unique and multi-faceted will thus seek to complement each other in this chapter.

Robson (1997) has observed that analytic discussion can be based on the relevant emerging theory. In this chapter I shall identify issues that are typical in all colleges and make analytic discussions based on the related theory of governance and management in the context of technical and vocational colleges. In my analysis and discussion I shall attempt to make cross-case comparisons where appropriate and match patterns and issues that have been analysed in chapter four, five and six as suggested by Robson (1997: 399).

## 7.2 Goals of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Context of Governance of Technical and Vocational Colleges

According to the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education, Dr Mambo, one of the goals of the ministry is “to run programmes whose quality is based on the quality that NAMACO and its sub-committees determine”. This objective is particular to technical and vocational education programmes. It assumes the existence of a neatly woven functional relationship of communication and collaboration between the technical and/or vocational colleges and the industrial private sector. As discussed and shown in chapter two quality management as seen by various theorists (Deming 1986, Oakland 1989, Walsh 1991, Murgatroyd and Morgan 1994 and Taylor and Hill 1997) implies the process of adapting the organisation to the ever-changing environment with a view to improving the quality of graduates or products. Appropriate inputs must be found and put into the system in order to generate the required results. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1994) have observed that the practice of quality control emphasises the concept of fitness for the purpose.

In this research the element of linkages between industry and educational establishments is recognised by the head of the ministry as the most significant aspect for delivering quality programmes. This fits in well with observations made by Middleton *et al.* (1993) that technical and vocational programmes should address the skills needs of the national economy. This leads me to the crucial issue of whether what Dr Mambo stated is captured in the philosophy and

mission of the ministry as a written policy statement guiding the operations of the ministry.

### 7.2.1 Mission Analysis

According to the Human Resources Development Plan: 1996 – 2000 (p.1) published by the Ministry of Higher Education (August 1996), the mandate of the ministry is expressed in its mission statement:

To provide, regulate and facilitate Tertiary Education and Training through the planning, development and implementation of effective policies, the provisions of resources and management of institutions in order to meet the human resources requirement of the economy and equip individuals to realise their potential.

This statement tends to emphasise the authoritative aspects of bureaucratic power in the use of the word “regulate”. At the same time the ministry considers itself as merely “facilitating tertiary education and training” rather than providing.

It seems to me therefore that the issue of goal *vis-à-vis* effectiveness is neither vividly expressed nor directly captured in the mission statement of the ministry. The issue does not seem to come out explicitly. As Rogers (1989: 54) argued the goal of higher education is

...an effective organisation in which effective individuals and effective groups act and interact through effective processes to accomplish established objectives.

The mission statement of Westgate which is “to provide systematic skills upgrading and increased utilisation of the technologies in order to improve industrial productivity and the quality of life in our society” appears specific and market-oriented in the areas of upgrade training and utilisation of technologies. It does not seem to capture the element of providing new skills, knowledge and attitudes to school leavers. Kwekwe’s mission statement talks about “total quality technical and vocational education and training that is responsive to the individual needs and demands of the national economy”. Total quality according to Taylor and Hill (1997) would mean quality throughout the entire process. Translated into practical terms this implies improving the effectiveness and flexibility of the entire system in terms of transforming every department and every activity as shown in chapter two. Kwekwe’s mission statement is dynamic and motivating. Effectiveness could perhaps be lacking because of other factors that will be analysed later in this chapter.

The mission statement of Harare Polytechnic is rather macro-centred. It talks about “the overall development of a national skills base necessary for economic development”. The national focus comes out very clearly. The statement goes further to address the issue of “responsiveness to the ever-changing manpower needs of commerce and industry.” Given this analysis of mission statement I get the sense that issues of “responsiveness” and “quality” are taken for granted by the Ministry of Higher Education whose mission statement is silent on ‘relevance’ or ‘appropriate’ human resource requirement. It seems that there is no single thread that ties all the loose but critical operations of the institutions to the ministry’s headquarters. This leads me to define the situation of missions between the centre (head office) and the periphery (technical institutions) as mission differentiation. In my analysis this could

explain the issues of unclear priorities in terms of resources and a lack of proper co-ordination. It seems as though the centre has not reflected on its mission in order to adopt social, economic and technological initiatives or interventions that boldly address the diversified technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe. Specific recommendations in respect of the goal of the ministry *vis-à-vis* mission differentiation will be discussed in the next chapter. I regard the mission statement of head office as a map describing a world that no longer exists if viewed in the context of technical and vocational colleges.

### 7.2.1 Legislative Framework in Governance

As discussed in chapter two the nature of the various decision-making mechanisms by major players in the process of running a college forms the system of governance. In the three case studies there are various pieces of legislative “instruments” that tend to obstruct the decision-making processes. According to my analysis of documentary sources Chapter 168 of the Audit and Exchequer Act which talks about financial management issues was revised on 5 April 1979. Its accompanying document - the Treasury Instructions - which specifies the procedures of handling money, purchases, control of assets and collection of revenue had most of the “headings” defined as subjects (subjects 1 000 to 1 006) and was revised on 26 October 1982. While little or nothing is happening in the revision of these legal documents the three colleges and the ministry have revised their mission statements in May 1996. I therefore get the sense that the regulations are not commensurate with the systems in place. I further get the impression that the regulations are to some



extent imposed on the Ministry of Higher Education by the Ministry of Finance.

There could thus be fundamental problems relating to the utilisation of these legislative documents. The fact that management at Westgate is embarking on new initiatives without making direct reference to government regulations and head office appears to be encouraging that approach at Westgate. The permanent secretary's assertion that the principal of Westgate "sounds like someone who is prepared to reform" is significant in recognising the transformation process despite the old regulations. The management of Harare Polytechnic is rather firm on sticking to government regulations as stated by the principal. My analysis is that the principal of Harare Polytechnic, having come from head office where he stayed for over 18 years, has been 'schooled' by head office to think in terms of making reference to government regulations.

On the other hand the Kwekwe management would prefer to use regulations in order to cushion itself from unexpected results that might arise due to wrong or inappropriate decisions. Perhaps one can understand the principal from the premise that he is working in an acting capacity.

A closer examination of these government regulations shows that, in essence, the regulations provide guidelines, deadlines and time frames for submission of documents, banking money or depositing received money, handling of the remittance register and guidelines for cancellation of receipts and transfer of receipt books. According to Treasury Instructions 0430 to 0433 conditions for custody of public money are spelt out and must be adhered to correctly. The same Instructions specify the methodology of handling losses and

deficiencies of public money, encashment and safe-keeping, including ways of dealing with dishonoured cheques or in some cases unrepresented cheques.

Clearly the regulations do present bureaucratic financial controls to institutions but they do not seem to prohibit any of the three principals from being innovative or adopting an entrepreneurial role in generating or raising funds for his college. Kreitner (1986) suggested the need for a manager of a complex relationship to form synergistic relationships with those with resource power. These synergistic relationships could be tried in the three colleges where the principal assumes what Mintzberg (1989) termed a negotiator role.

According to the Audit and Exchequer Act the issue of regulations is essentially an issue of reservation of authority and powers so as to avoid misuse of public funds and to avert corruption. The Government of Zimbabwe's Accounting Officer's Instructions as interpreted by the former Permanent Secretary (Dr E J Chanakira 1989:2) stated:

The Accounting Officer's authority is not delegated in respect of powers to authorise only the following:

- Any unusual expenditure for which provision was not contained in the Estimated of Expenditure.
- Direct correspondence with the Comptroller and Audit – General, Treasury and the Public Service Commission unless prior written authority has been given.
- Virement

- Approval of Boards of Survey and formal “written-off” assets whose replacement value exceeds \$150.
- Approval of write-off revenue above \$2 000.

What this means is that authority and powers of the permanent secretary (defined as the accounting officer for the ministry) are reserved and not delegated. In this case a principal wishing to use these powers can always seek the authority of the permanent secretary to do so. This could be a tedious process which could also demotivate the principal.

As Sergiovanni (1991) has observed education programmes should aim at achieving objectives within national development plans set by governments and their communities. The principal as the manager of educational programmes at his/her institution is mandated to reconcile financial regulations with the Manpower Act. The Act, as discussed in chapter two, spells out the overall responsibility of the principal in managing both the internal system and the external environment. Issues of enrolment, curriculum implementation, welfare of students and co-operation with the outside world will need his conceptual and decision-making role. Such issues cannot be divorced from the financial regulations and the Manpower Act.

In the case of head office it seems to me that the resource power and authority of the permanent secretary are elements which are not being fully harnessed and utilised appropriately in order for the ministry to attain the goal that it has set for itself as defined in its mission statement. The paradox of the discrepancy created by the ‘interpretation’ of government regulations, principals’ lack of initiatives or resourcefulness and interpretation of the Manpower Act

could be summed up by this extract taken from the Human Resources Development Plan: 1996 – 2000 (August 1996:2) as follows:

While unemployment in Zimbabwe is high, a skill gap at higher professional and technical levels throughout the public and private sectors continue to exist clearly indicating a need to offer training at higher levels and diversifying the curriculum in order to capture the essential skills required.

It seems to me that the legal framework should not be a scapegoat for what is not happening. The regulations in themselves are rather outdated and may tend to create long channels of bureaucratic delays between the college and the ministry. But in essence the principal can achieve much through resourcefulness, expertise and negotiation skills. The significance of my assertion is being demonstrated at Westgate despite the “prohibitive” regulations.

### 7.2.2 Power and Influence in Governance

In the three case studies the use of power and the levels of power appear somewhat particularistic. In the case of Westgate management feels that they need more discretion and power to make critical decisions involving staff recruitment and manpower planning.

Kwekwe feels the same but tends to look at head office as an organisation that is abusing its power by giving audience to junior staff from the college who end up undermining the principal's power. In the case of Harare Polytechnic which already has the power and

authority to do so much the principal is not happy with policies such as control of who is to be invited as a guest at his prize-giving day. He attributes part of his failures to a lack of power to control events. This debate calls for a critical analysis of power and influence in the governance of the three technical and vocational colleges.

Head office can influence what goes on in the three institutions through a policy bulletin or a memorandum to the principal. Handy (1993: 112) made the assertion that:

If we are to understand organisations we must understand the nature of power and influence for they are the means by which the people of the organisation are linked to its purpose.

Handy (1993: 112) further defines power and influence as follows:

“Influence is the process whereby A modifies the attitudes or behaviour of B. Power is that which enables him to do it”. Within the context of power, influence and authority, it seems to me that head office, as an organic structure (Handy 1993; Swanepoel 1993; Smith and Vecchio 1997) with colleges in the periphery, may need to revisit its stated intended agenda of decentralising authority and power.

As Sergiovanni (1991: 57) observed control of events is a critical managerial imperative for any principal and for him/her to do that he/she will need power to control inputs. In this regard head office may need to solve what Mintzberg (1989) might describe as the “coordination paradox” for Harare Polytechnic.

To me this implies that even if the principal of Harare Polytechnic has certain powers the unit of command and the division of labour which are left loose must be clearly defined within the context of the

principal's distinctive tasks and head office's structured policies and accountability. If the principal has a choice of who to report to it is not an advantage but rather a weakness in the system.

Before power is de centralised to colleges (as desired by Dr Mambo) principals may need to be empowered with expertise particularly in the area of managing accountability. The principal of Harare Polytechnic indicated problems of staff shortages and performance standards. To me he does not seem to realise that he is accountable for the performance of the college and thus is responsible for staff appraisals, staff development and for the outcomes of his staff workmanship.

The principals of Kwekwe and Westgate do not command the same power as the head of Harare Polytechnic. The significant problem at Kwekwe is not about power or the lack thereof but the lack of relevant skills in managing change and the external environment such as head office - which has the resource power to solve the "manpower gaps" at the college - or the industrial private sectors - which has the expert power needed in curriculum reviews. According to Koffler (1977) successful managers use the little power they have to acquire more power through the creation of a sense of obligation to subordinates and to those around them. This implies that the manager can create a "professional reputation" and a "track record" as a source of power so that even those in powerful positions will want to identify with him/her or will perceive a sense of dependency for him/her. Power in itself can therefore be empowering according to Koffler's (1977) notion. Principals of the three colleges have perhaps not realised this which would explain their tendency to wait for power to be devolved to them as part of decentralisation. My

impression of the decentralisation 'agenda' is that it has a long way to go before it might be actually implemented.

In the case of head office where the principal has (position power) formal authority by virtue of the positions that senior management in the ministry hold resource power and in some cases personal power enhanced by the status generated by being in head office, some 're-engineering' process could be introduced. This could be on suggestions advanced by Davies (1997) cited in chapter six. This could start by re-engineering those policy control 'mind-sets' in head office and influencing a paradigm shift in their thinking with a view to getting them to reflect on people in colleges rather than policies, structures and regulations in colleges. In reflecting on people the principal of Harare Polytechnic, having come from head office, will need to follow Senge's (1990) advice of re-examining the hard-to-see patterns of interactions between people and processes and ask what works for the goals of the polytechnic.

### 7.3 Principalship: Role Analysis

Bush (1995) observed that colleges are managed by predominantly education professionals of varied backgrounds. In the three case studies it has been shown that the three principals of Westgate, Kwekwe and Harare do have varied educational backgrounds. None of them has had any further education or training in the area of educational management. This has implications on how they perceive their management roles as individual educationalists. The research has shown that the principals have to function within a wide barrage of roles including role overload, role stress and role ambiguity. Also the way principals understand their roles has a

bearing in shedding some light to the whole question of managing oneself.

### 7.3.1 Management of Self

The principal of Westgate is aware of the demands and complexities of principalship. He is ready to both manage and lead. His share division and his sense of responsibility are drawn from his belief that Westgate is accountable to the labour market, both in terms of producing appropriately trained manpower for jobs in industry and for self-employment. My analysis is that the principal of Westgate is a self-managing person who reflects on his actions and critical decisions *vis-à-vis* goals of the institution and career destinations of his students.

The case of Kwekwe reflects a principal who is more human relations oriented and one who pays little attention to the accomplishment of results as defined by the college goals. He sees himself as a bureaucrat who is at the apex of college management in order to transmit policy from head office. Invariably the principal refers cases to head office despite his belief about the need to empower principals with decision-making responsibilities. It seems that he is very much trapped in his job description. Elements of awareness *vis-à-vis* the diversity of his role appear to be remote. Also accountability and individual ownership of the system are issues which have been confined to the principal because of his own lack of a deeper understanding of his role.

As shown in chapter two and further discussed in chapter six the question of how a principal perceives his/her role determines how well he/she can fit into the organisation and how he/she is able to



mediate between the expectations of stakeholders and the mission of the organisation. The principal of Hare Polytechnic has not yet fitted into the system at the college. He brings from head office rigid approaches which emphasise planning, structures, rules and regulations.

In this case what is emerging is role incompatibility with head office expecting certain things to be done because of his higher level status and discretion: yet the principal feels differently about certain critical decisions involving his position role.

### 7.3.2 Management of Internal Operations

Related literature captured in the theoretical framework chapter has shown that internal operations in a technical college involve the systems of planning courses, organising resources and monitoring the teaching and learning processes. According to Bush (1995) management of internal operations along the lines of the collegial model demands that the principal consults and deliberates widely in making major decisions. That appears to be the case at Westgate. In the wake of inadequate financial resources the college management is creating its own supplementary funds through the sale of products made by students or services rendered in the process of teaching and learning. A culture of entrepreneurial skills is being created. As Hanson (1985) observed the management work of the principal is characterised by his/her actions and results.

Westgate's approach in managing internal operations could be closely linked to total quality management as propounded by Harris *et al.* (1997). It is clear from observations, documents and interviews

that the management at Westgate is essentially concerned with achieving results that are 'customer -focused', in this case industry focused. This is done through the mobilisation of all the activities involving every department and every person.

Kwekwe's management of internal operations is characterised by elements of Bush's (1995) political model. The ministry's head office strongly influences the broad character of the college. In this dimension the principal's role is reduced to that of a mediator between two blocs, namely head office and the college. The management of internal operations is further weakened by delays in appointments of staff by head office and delays in arriving at decisions sought from head office by the principal. The study has shown that the role of the principal at Kwekwe appears complex and ambiguous and that institutional goals are rather unclear. In institutions similar to this Bass (1990) has observed that the Path-Goal Theory might encourage better performance and higher productivity if leadership or top management made the paths to the goals clearer and easier. In the case of Kwekwe head office is not making the job of the principal easier by its excessive red tape and bureaucratic delays.

The principal of Harare Polytechnic tends to follow the bureaucratic model by sticking to rules, structures and procedures. Despite his 'autonomy' and relatively more powers the system of college management is not responding to better and modern equipment, improved staff morale and better funding for the teaching and learning process. Perhaps his drive for participatory action research might pave the way for devising appropriate approaches that are not too bureaucratic. His action research work might focus on the need to review the quality of graduates in terms of assessing his/her

“readiness to fit in society and to enter the job market” as suggested by the chairperson of the college advisory council. The principal of the polytechnic might need to be developed in key issues of analysing his accountability to the industry and to students and not just to the ministry in head office.

### 7.3.3 Management of the External Environment

Since the principal of a technical or vocational college is accountable to commerce and industry for the absorption and employment of his/her graduates and to the ministry's head office as the responsible authorities, the issue of managing that external environment emerged as a critical governance role in the three case studies. Westgate management tries to insulate students and staff from “policy pressures” coming from head office. Problems of understaffing and delays in appointments are overshadowed by the *ubuntu* spirit of harmony and high morale based on team work and group solidarity. With the coming of the new principal the college started enjoying both a solid network and a strong relationship with the industrial sector.

Kwekwe is characterised by a variety of difficult relationships in its efforts to manage the external environment. The issues could be stemming from the principal's lack of understanding of his management role compounded by a culture of non-effectiveness in achieving expected outcomes. Tensions are visible between college management and head office and between the college management and the industrial sector. These tensions could be explained on the basis of suspicion by the principal that his authority is undermined by members of staff who are “related to some people in head office”.

Industry through its representative member has indicated that management of the college is failing in basic issues of collaboration such as holding meetings with the advisory council.

The management of Harare Polytechnic is rather comfortable in managing its relationships with head office. I get the sense that the principal is familiar with the dynamics of head office. This could impinge on his opportunity to critically reflect on his relationship with head office thus affecting his effective evaluation. Although there is consultation between the college and the industrial sector the outcomes appear rather cloudy if not absent. As Bush (1995) suggested the critical issue in managing the external environment is obtaining feedback and utilising that feedback in improving and developing the organisation.

In this analytical discussion it has become evident that the critical management function of managing the external environment is not well understood in the two case studies. I get the sense that this is a complex issue which requires the principal to mediate between the expectations of major stakeholders and the mission of his institution. It is therefore a role-perception issue on the part of the college manager. In the next chapter I offer some recommendations and strategies on how this issue could be addressed in technical and vocational colleges perhaps before more 'legitimate power' is given to principals through the intended decentralisation policy.

#### 7.3.4 Management of Students and Staff

Bush (1995) has pointed out the need for managers to appropriately mobilise the human element in organisations as the basis for

completing work more efficiently and more effectively. This could be done through team-building experiences, effective interpersonal communication and creating an environment in which people are motivated to accomplish their goals.

In the case of Westgate management is managing not only to accomplish the desired results but influencing and guiding people towards new directions of change. At this institution staff affairs and student affairs are attended to on a regular proactive basis through meetings and informal interactions. As argued by Louis and Miles (1990, in Davies and Ellison 1997) what works in the management of an education system is the combination of being both task and people oriented.

Kwekwe gives the impression that management is rather humanistic and focused on one dimension, namely the human side of the organisation. The principal is bent heavily on students' welfare with little or no attention given to interpersonal conflicts involving members of staff and those dominant personalities at the institution. French *et al.* (1994) have stated that the key tools that could be most useful in management are decision-making skills, information skills and interpersonal skills. In this debate it becomes clearer that these tools are of little use if the manager does not realise and claim the structural authority that he/she has, based on the understanding of his/her job position and from his/her knowledge.

Harare Polytechnic is using action research to diagnose the problems of effectiveness. The series of strike action by students, as confirmed by the principal, could well be a demonstration that all is not well in the management of human resources at the institution. Comments appearing in newspapers (chapter six) have shown that the process

of consultation needs to be revisited as a strong tool for establishing co-operation, collaboration and effectiveness.

In this discussion I get the sense that in the case of Kwekwe and Harare Polytechnic any tool is as good as the hand that holds it. Perhaps there is a need to move from management which tends to emphasise stability and efficiency to leadership. The emphasis on leadership, according to Smither (1994), seeks to stress influencing people to change and aligning people to jobs by getting them to agree about what needs to be accomplished. To me the ultimate result is effectiveness (doing things right) and not just efficiency (doing the right things). Activities of managing people are not about mastering routines as in management but rather activities of vision, careful judgement and guiding, hence my shift to leadership in this context.

#### 7.4 Collaboration between the Colleges and Head Office

In the three case studies collaboration between the colleges and head office emerges a delicate and complex affair. Officials in head office have the propensity of telling the college principal what is to be done by issuing directives and instructions. Examples could be cited such as who to invite on graduation day as guest speaker, as seen in the case of Harare Polytechnic, or who to engage for jobs and how to solve cases of misconduct as discussed in the cases of Westgate and Kwekwe.

It seems that head office officials are comfortably cushioned in the 'corridors of power' surrounding them. They also possess resource power and so they determine the amount of funds to be disbursed to the colleges. It is also head office which considers such critical

running costs as transport provisions for following up students on industrial attachments. Head office also decides which college to fund for major capital developments such as the construction of a library at the Harare Polytechnic or at Kwekwe College.

Another issue that tends to militate against effective collaboration between the colleges and head office is that of government regulations. These tend to pull apart the centre and the periphery. In terms of the Manpower Act discussed in chapter two all the powers are vested in the minister. At the same time regulations which deal with assets and "proper use of funds" are vested in the permanent secretary in head office. It therefore becomes clear that the principal as the manager at the chalkface has limited legitimate power in terms of the legal framework machinery in place. The principal has to seek authority from head office in order to make some monetary decisions or manpower planning decisions. He/she can only depend on expert power or his/her own initiative, ingenuity and decision-making skills if he/she is to manage effectively.

I get the sense that there is role incompatibility between head office and the colleges. The centre expects certain things to be done by college heads whilst the heads have their own expectations of how and what head office should be doing.

In the final analysis the principal as the manager on the ground could suffer from role stress as expressed by the Kwekwe principal. It could also be a possibility that role stress may have affected the former principal of Harare Polytechnic who suffered a stroke attack. The principal as the manager at the college is accountable to the students, to the community and to the surrounding industrial sector apart from his accountability to head office.

As the debate unfolds the principal in any of the three colleges has two choices. He/she can adopt the Westgate approach of forging ahead using his ingenuity to manage and lead the institution or 'sink' in bureaucracy and manage through regulations and policies coming from head office. The latter, according to my analysis, has demonstrated that effectiveness could be compromised as observed in case studies of Harare Polytechnic and Kwekwe Technical College.

It seems therefore that issues of collaboration in college governance require strategic leadership. This, according to various theorists (Sergiovanni 1991, Kossen 1994, Smith 1995 and Vecchio 1997), draws on the leadership notion and practice of keeping abreast of trends and issues of threats and opportunities and sharing knowledge and information with the outside world. The leadership notion also draws from Roe and Drake's (1980: 35) conception of formulating synergetic relationships with the external environment as opposed to keeping one's mind simply focused on planning, organising and controlling the organisation. The next section will further analyse collaboration between the colleges and the industrial sector *vis-à-vis* effective management of a technical / vocational college.

### 7.5 Collaboration between the Colleges and the Industrial Sector

As discussed in chapter two managers of technical and vocational colleges, by the very nature of their roles, should be accountable to the labour market in general and to the industrial economy in particular.



This arises from the notion and practice that technical and vocational education should be directly linked to the labour market demands through constant interactions and curriculum review meetings. Industry is the consumer of the products of these institutions.

In all the three colleges involved in this study there are relatively expensive technological equipment and teaching materials. The teaching and learning process is complex as it involves an integrated curriculum of theory and practice. Management of such institutions must be a complex exercise of collaboration, co-operation and linkage networking with all key players. Given this analysis I get the sense that principals must have the cognitive understanding of their roles. In this role understanding the use of committees make the collaboration truly synergic.

Case studies of Kwekwe and Harare Polytechnic have shown that collaborative efforts between the colleges and the industrial sector do not seem to be working well. In the case of Westgate collaboration between the college and its surrounding industrial sector appears to be effective. Nonetheless at Westgate there is concern over the manner in which head office deals with issues between the industrial sector and the college. It has emerged that matters coming from industry which require the intervention of head office are not taken seriously by head office. This impacts negatively on the college advisory council's enthusiasm to participate in college management affairs. At the same time if meetings are not yielding any meaningful results the principal tends to be frustrated.

This debate is showing that head office could be contributing to the downplaying of possible collaboration between colleges and their

industrial sectors by not responding effectively to issues raised; this is evident in all the three case studies. This leaves me with the sense that the principal is being reduced to what Roe and Drake (1998: 281) describes as a “management mechanic” of head office. This ‘reality’ can militate against total quality management which requires total commitment of every department, every activity and every person.

## 7.6 Summary

This chapter has analysed and discussed case specific issues of governance and management at Westgate, Kwekwe and Harare Polytechnic. Cross-case comparisons were made where appropriate and areas of commonality identified and analysed.

Relevant issues associated with the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education were discussed within the context of governance of the three technical colleges. In the analysis it was recognised that collaborative linkages between colleges and industry were unavoidable but tended to be delicate and complex.

Management effectiveness tended to vary in the three cases. The question of the responsiveness of the technical and vocational education system to the labour market demands points to a gap between the ministry’s thrust and the goals of the colleges. There is therefore a mission differentiation between the centre and the periphery. This could be creating fundamental problems of role ambiguity resulting in distorted role perceptions and role stress at the college management level.

Particular organisational cultures have emerged in the three institutions. These are influenced to a large extent by management practices prevailing, the power and authority that the principal commands and his/her understanding of his/her role and mission. Multi goals have also emerged at Kwekwe and at Harare Polytechnic and these seem to be serving the varied interest groups rather than addressing areas of accountability as is the situation at Westgate. Compounding the problem is the issue of outdated rules and regulations being enforced by head office. I get the sense of an attitude of 'them' and 'us'. The use of excessive bureaucratic red tape by head office in organising and controlling resources for colleges does not give room for independent thinking by principals. The fact that head office formulates policy directives for colleges tends to leave principals with little authority and power for decision-making practices.

The chapter concludes by examining the impact of the relationships existing between colleges and head office and between colleges and industry. Where the relationship is yielding positive outcomes the principal appears to have a deeper insight into the manifestations of his/her role as both a manager and a leader. In this regard traditional boundaries of hierarchy and power are broken into psychological boundaries that are invisible.

Towards the end of this discussion it becomes clearer to me that what is needed in these colleges is leadership more than management or perhaps a combination of both. An analysis of the three case studies could provide sufficient data for others to judge the applicability and subsequent transferability to their own contextual situations in governance and management of similar institutions.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to consolidate and bring together the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the case studies of three technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe. The chapter will also reflect on the research questions and the related theory discussed in the literature review. This is intended to incorporate the theoretical framework with the findings and relate the findings to the research questions. This I hope will provide a 'fine thread' in order to tie up all the critical ends.

A summary of the main research findings will be discussed. The chapter will then make recommendations for revitalizing the system of governance and management of these technical and vocational institutions. The thesis concludes with suggestions for further research.

#### 8.2 Research Questions

The study was prompted by my attempt to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of managing a technical institution in Zimbabwe within the wider area of governance. As such a multi-case exploration of college governance and management was carried out. I found it appropriate to dig beneath the surface in the three cases for

those intangible forces that impact on the way the technical and vocational colleges are managed. On this exploration journey I used semi-structured interviews on focus groups, documentary sources in the form of college reports, minutes of meetings, legislative materials and observation techniques.

Based on the advice of Yin (1984) who emphasised the particularity of each case, I attempted to examine how each technical college conceives and tries to deal with its world. Cognizant of the limitations of a single case study in unearthing issues of governance I decided to seek common elements in the three cases in order to allow comparisons and cross-case discussion. In line with my desire to accomplish my research goal, to discover the in-depth meanings of the informants' experiences, notions and concerns related to governance and management, I formulated six key research questions as follows:

- What is the nature of governance in a typical government technical and vocational college in Zimbabwe?
- What management role does the principal occupy within the governance system of the institution?
- How is industry involved in the governance and management of the college?
- How does the participation of the head office as the responsible authority influence the governance and management of the college?

- What are the issues and concerns in the relationships involving head office, industry and college management in the governance system?
- What recommendations and corrections could be made in order to make the system of governance and management more effective?

As I embarked on my preliminary literature search linked to addressing these six broad questions I discovered that attempts to answer these questions had never been carried out before in Zimbabwe.

On further reading around the topic I realised that there were some critical parallel 'sub-questions' emerging from each of the broad research questions. The question of the individual's interpretation of his/her role in governance emerged. The issues of colleges preparing students to enter the labour market or the programmes meeting industrial demand became critical. Issues of social policy and the use of legislation as control mechanisms became central to the parallel sub-questions. Such issues were used in formulating in-depth interview questions for the research participants.

The research questions therefore formed the basis for my understanding of the complex practice of governance as a social phenomenon in cognisance of management roles of principals, people's beliefs, values, experiences and sensitivities. This understanding was further enhanced by the related theory, hence the need to explain the essential place of theory in this study.

### 8.3 The Place of Theory in the Research

The verification of the interpretation of major findings is regarded as an essential element in study. According to Kvale (1996 : 244) the verification process against the research questions “is an intrinsic part of grounded theory”. Though I have not strictly applied grounded theory in the technical sense there are elements of this approach in this research.

In an attempt to expand on and provide insights into the topic being investigated the conceptual theory is analysed in the context of the research questions. I believe any reader of this report will be assisted in developing a framework in which the broad concepts of governance and management do fit in a technical education scenario.

### 8.4 A Synopsis of Related Theory and Research Findings

In this section I describe the main elements emerging from the research findings. I attempt to consolidate and synthesize the relevant theory and the emerging theoretical perspectives. I interpret data from the reality constructed by the individual respondents. In this discussion I further attempt to report the coherence of the interpretation in an effort to validate the results of my findings. As such each case is unique and will therefore provide sufficient description that will assist in the concept of transferability so that other readers may judge the applicability of these findings to their own contexts.

#### 8.4.1 The Governance System

The study showed that governance in a college of technical and vocational education is about power, control and participation of all legitimate interest groups. This encompasses the concept of shared responsibility in the way an institution is supported by authorities on technical and vocational education (Verma 1990, Psacharopoulos 1991, Middleton *et al.* 1993). In this regard I developed the sense that the nature of governance is theoretically based on functional link structures, tensions and relationships involving college management, government systems in head office and the participation of the industrial private sector.

In the three case studies it was unearthed and explained that government through head office (Ministry of Higher Education and Technology) 'prescribes' the policies and regulatory framework through a variety of legal and statutory documents such as the Manpower Planning and Development Act, Number 24 of 1994, Treasury Instructions and the Audit and Exchequer Act. Further, head office produces circulars, letters and policy directives to technical institutions and these tend to describe the way things should happen or broadly how systems should be managed at the college level.

As such head office enjoys the privileges of both position power and resource power. Related literature has shown that power could be used to create teams and share responsibility through sharing information in a transparent manner. According to Beer *et al.* (1990) creating teams through information sharing rather than information imposition is one sure manner of yielding effectiveness in a task-driven organisation.



In analysing governance in the three cases I found multiple goals exist side by side. Of the goals identified related literature has shown that output goals, product goals and system goals must all be compatible with industrial goals set by the college advisory council representing the industrial private sector. In one case the research showed that there is goal incompatibility between the college and its advisory council. In this case the sub-question of whether or not the governance system was effectively preparing the students (output goal) to enter the labour market produced negative answers. This was mainly due to a lack of meetings or poor communication between college management and the industrial sector.

In another case things are not happening in the manner they should because the college does not seem to take its goals seriously, or there is a lack of understanding of its own mission. Such problems of management affect the governance system thus compelling head office or indeed the responsible authority to 'run the show' as explained in the case of Kwekwe. As pointed out by Dalin (1998) and supported by French *et al.* (1994) effective organisational management depends on making the right decisions at the right time and this is heavily dependent on goal understanding and goal commitment by key players at the management level.

The nature and effectiveness of governance in the technical institutions is further affected by what I have described in chapter seven as mission differentiation between head office's core emphasis in its mission statement of the technical institution. Theorists (Deming 1986; Walsh 1991; Taylor and Hill 1997) have talked about the need for organisations to revisit their mission statements. This is based on the premise that organisations are not static. Their goals do

change as do their roles particularly in the context of an ever-changing external environment.

As I carried out the verification of the related theory to the questions on governance I came to understand some new dimensions. Governance is more than power, control and taking responsibility of an institution. It is essentially about relationships within those power structures and effective communication in the control systems which calls upon the need for consultation, self reflection and self analysis of management practice.

#### 8.4.2 The Principal as the Manager

The Principal is hired by government to manage the institution. In doing so he/she is equipped with a job description that appears to me narrowly defined thus lacking the breadth and depth of salient intangible issues he/she must cover.

On the ground it came out clearly that in fact the principal occupies a multi-role position as a leader, a negotiator, mentor, facilitator of change and entrepreneurial head. He/she must respond to the needs of staff and students, head office and the outside world such as the industrial sector. Mintzberg (1989) distinguishes among three roles – the interpersonal, information and decision-making roles - as critical in bringing about effective management. Related theory has shown that the interpersonal role is utilised in integrating individual needs to organisational objectives, liaising and networking and in providing direction and motivation to staff and students. The principal of Harare Polytechnic does not seem to understand this role. In the case of Westgate the principal understands the essence of his

interpersonal role and is able to use it in order to introduce changes in the system without creating any disturbances or resistance.

Again in one case the use of authority and government regulations has tended to create a wide gap between the principal as manager and his staff and students. This approach has resulted in a series of sporadic strike action by students.

In another case the interpersonal role appeared to be misunderstood by the manager who tended to isolate himself from his staff whilst enjoying a good relationship with students. Because of this phenomenon staff morale is low and the principal admitted himself that he was feeling highly stressed with the job.

As has been discussed, the information role is critical in deciding who should receive what information. In a technical college it was explained that the principal has an important role of establishing effective communication channels, conducting meetings involving both insiders and outsiders and disseminating important information to the college staff and students. In the three cases only one principal appears to understand this important role dimension with the result that the institution functions effectively and vibrantly as shown in chapter four.

According to Fullan (1993) this information role is essential in constant monitoring and evaluation of how things are going. I tend to agree with this notion having understood that at Westgate the issues of theft of college property were identified and resolved as the manager was constantly monitoring the movement and utilisation of expensive engineering equipment using his information role.

The decision-making role appeared problematic in the three cases. In one case the principal took risks in making major decisions such as the creation of an entrepreneurial climate at his college resulting in the establishment of a production centre and changing the organisational system and reporting structures in the training workshops.

Bennett *et al.* (1994) and Bush (1995) call for self-confidence and a sense of organisational ownership as key principles in making discussions. On the same subject Kiggundu (1986:96) warns that organisations in developing countries may tend to prohibit or pose limitations to the degree of decision-making through political interference or interventions. Be that as it may, the case of Harare Polytechnic showed a manager whose level in government is higher than other managers; he has more latitude in decision-making but appeared to be schooled into the *status quo* syndrome. In one college there appeared to be a propensity of leaving things as they are, referring issues to head office or perhaps hiding behind those rules and regulations supplied and imposed by head office.

In the three case studies I gained the impression that negotiating for resources amidst economic hardships or amidst tight budgetary constraints had become a critical issue in the decision-making process. It was also clear that solving crisis situations demanded high level decision-making processes as part of the manager's challenge.

Smither (1994:263) argued that some managers fail to make decisions and change because people are more comfortable with the familiar and therefore suffer from the fear of failure. To me the study has brought a new understanding of the role of the principal, not so

much as a manager of routine college activities and operations but as a decision-making leader of a complex educational institution.

Based on this notion Fowler and Graves (1995:197) have suggested that making decisions requires the use of the several steps namely : gathering information, evaluating implications, looking at options and finally making the decision quickly. Whilst this may be a true mechanistic process for a manager the case of Westgate has suggested that making decisions should be a quick and natural process which requires a leadership mind.

As such it has been explained that risks are lessened or minimised by the sense of judgment that draws from the trust and confidence that a leader earns, more than the power that one might have. The trust and confidence earned were in tangible issues that clearly emerged in the case of Westgate where the leader-member relations were relatively good as explained by members of staff and students. I therefore got the sense that to be effective as a principal of a technical college in Zimbabwe one may need to understand one's role as a leader rather than a manager. The next section will discuss this notion.

#### 8.4.3 The Principal as the Leader

Earlier in this study it was pointed out by the permanent secretary that there were moves to give more "power and autonomy" to the principals of technical colleges. If this happens the effectiveness of these colleges might be affected as a result of a lack of appreciation of the critical leadership role surrounding the job of heading an institution.

As I embarked on my research journey I looked at various theorists (Roe and Drake 1980, Bush 1989, Smit and Cronje 1992, Bennett *et al.* 1994, Everard and Morris 1996) who have written on educational management. These theorists tended to agree on the four core elements embracing those critical aspects of a principal's role as propounded by Sergiovanni (1991) and Van der Westhuizen (1991), namely the technical aspects as they relate to college structures and events; the human aspects in respect of managing staff and students; the education aspects as they relate to syllabuses; time tables and curriculum issues and the financial aspects in respect of fees and college assets. When I then went into the field to talk to participants in the three case studies, I discovered that the principals were not only ordinary managers but unique managers occupying a critical leadership role of 'managing' more *complex issues which were largely invisible*. In the three cases the principals were managing *compliance issues, shared values* within the context of articulating the college mission, *uncertainty* in respect of the outside world and basically managing *change*.

As such these principals are operating as leaders rather than as managers. According to theorists on organisational development in education (Rogers 1989, Senge 1990, Bottery 1992, Dekker and Lemmer 1993, Taylor and Hill 1997, Harris *et al.* 1997, Dalin 1998) a head of an institution where the mandate is to bring about change and set the direction for that change through the creation of a shared vision and values should be seen as occupying a leadership role.

Apart from creating a vision for the institution one of the leader's major challenges is the issue of accountability. As Fowler and Graves (1995:27) put it getting operations to be more effective demands that the leader understands his/her role in terms of "answerability" to someone. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1994) explain accountability as the need to submit an account of action against a background of standards as expected by the system or the customers.

In the case of the three institutions the customers who are the systems' "taste buds" are the industrialists, the ministry, staff and students. Two of the principals interviewed in this research did not seem to understand their roles in terms of accountability. One of them even admitted that his role was to "transmit policy from head office to ...his college". Related theory has shown the need for professional accountability to oneself and one's colleagues, contractual accountability to industry and to head office and moral accountability to students. What was shown in two colleges was defensive accountability where the principal tended to be comfortable with regulations and policy circulars from head office as a routine system of defending himself against effectiveness. As such my understanding of accountability stemming from the three cases and the theory is that the principal as a leader should be responsive to what constitutes the college environment as an organisation with set goals responsible for the dynamics of the field forces. It is a question of how individual actors understand and interpret their roles.

### 8.4.3 Management of Relationships with Industry: Role Ambiguity

Documentary sources in the form of minutes of meetings held between college management and industrially based advisory councils have shown that the role of the private industrial sectors in shaping the curriculum and indeed the employment destination of students is not very clear.

Even the Manpower Act of 1994, the key instrument guiding the relationship, leaves a number of gaps such as a lack of incentives for employer participation to meetings, provision for feedback from the ministry on issues raised by industrialists and the non-involvement of these advisory boards in the appointment of college management.

In all the case studies the industrialists explained the critical role that they could be playing in terms of getting the colleges to respond to the ever changing needs of commerce and industry if their roles were clearly understood. Related theory has shown that technical and vocational education has its origins in industry.

On reflection of the poor relationships that are visible between college management and industry in the three technical colleges I got the sense that the problem is linked with role ambiguity. Fiedler and Chemers (1984) have pointed out leadership and group members may develop hostility and poor relationship if roles are not clearly defined in a governance situation existing outside the normal bureaucratic hierarchical structure. Beer *et al.* (1990) have pointed out the need for team building through sharing information if governance is to be more effective.



The issues of Westgate and Kwekwe reflect communication problems between the industrial sector and college authorities in the head office and between the authorities in head office and college management. Westgate showed that the advisory council “is left in the dark of what is happening” in terms of crucial policy decisions of either commercialising certain functions of the college or privatising. In the case of Kwekwe some essential components of the curriculum are not being taught despite repeated calls by industrialists to incorporate them. In some engineering training programmes certain key elements of the practical lessons have been stopped due to shortages of funding despite calls by industrialists for appropriate funding. This situation is resulting in Kwekwe and Harare Polytechnic being compelled to only teach the theoretical aspects of some practical engineering courses.

As such role ambiguity has militated against mutual dependence and co-operation, resulting in the delivery of ‘half baked’ courses and poorly skilled manpower. According to related theory Middleton *et al.* (1993) and Verma (1990) have pointed out that a sound relationship between a technical college’s management and its industrial sector is critical in ensuring that the technical and vocational programmes are effective in terms of responsiveness to the manpower needs of that industry. The three case studies have shown that this relationship, which forms an essential linkage device in the governance practice, has not been understood or taken with the seriousness that it deserves mainly due to role ambiguity.

#### 8.4.5 Management of Relationships with Head Office: Role Conflict

As I examined the study of head office in this multi-case study of governance through multiple sources of evidence already explained in chapter three it became clearer from decisions, processes and events that there is 'excessive bureaucracy' and red-tape in head office. To further complicate issues the Act governing technical and vocational education appears evasive in a number of critical areas. For example meetings between college management and college advisory councils are not scheduled or stipulated in a precise manner but that these "committees must meet regularly". The mandate in respect of who convenes such meetings is not stated. Against this explanation it is possible that officers in head office are cushioned in the corridors of power to the extent that issues affecting the core business of technical institutions appear to be underplayed. The three colleges highlighted excessive delays in staff appointments, poor communication and in the case of Kwekwe the use of defective or inappropriate channels of communication. Head office is seen as being high handed in its dealings with principals as explained by Westgate, Kwekwe and even Harare Polytechnic whose leadership is pegged at a higher level. According to Bargh *et al.* (1995) such problems of bureaucratic inefficiencies could be emerging from a position of role conflict among key players in governance.

In this debate the permanent secretary explained that head office has a role in making policy decisions but that principals also had to make some decisions. Holmes (1993) points out that policies in college or school governance are documents that highlight the aims, objectives and implementation strategies for key activities. Based on

this theory the issue of role conflict emerges. In this study a senior officer in head office indicated that college heads are getting too much direction from head office instead of standing on their own while the permanent secretary maintained “these people have become principals and decided to resist”. According to Kwekwe’s principal the head is working at the college “like a messenger for head office” who has to refer issues and wait for responses which could take up to two years to get feedback.

My interpretation is that this is a desperate relationship which is compounded by a conflict of roles exerted by people in head office who really feel powerful. In my interview discussion with the principal of Harare Polytechnic he kept repeating:

...I merely told them off. These are youngsters in head office... They are very rude.

In chapters two and six Bargh *et al.* (1996) and Vecchio (1997) respectively warn systems such as the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology’s head office to avoid being too bureaucratic to the extent of becoming unresponsive and impersonal to both structures and people that make the educational organisation effective. At Westgate it was shown that the principal felt he had limited power in shaping his institution through his own recruitment and appointment of staff whereas at Harare Polytechnic the principal had the legitimate power but was not doing so perhaps because he lacked expert power. Related theory has shown that in governance situations where roles are clearly demarcated and people are aware of their roles they may tend to use normative power which creates a sense of affiliation within the system and its espoused values. In this report the multi-case study has shown that management in technical

colleges feel a sense of alienative involvement, hence the negative attitude and a feeling of rejection. Strategies for calculative involvement and collegiality will be recommended later in this chapter.

#### 8.4.5 Limitations in the Effective Governance of a Technical/Vocational College

The study has shown that there are some fundamental limitations in the effective governance of a technical and vocational college in Zimbabwe. Against this framework of Kvale's (1996) advice these limitations focusing on the local and unique knowledge of each case could be used for generalisability and transferability. Readers may adequately judge the applicability of these issues in their own context. Accordingly the following are the key issues that are somewhat particularistic to the case studies and also common across two or three cases:

- lack of understanding of the individual actors' leadership roles in governance;
- lack of leadership skills resulting in a rather mechanistic management approach;
- lack of expert power on the part of senior people in head office and at college management level, hence role conflict;
- poor communication among key players yielding low morale and ineffective relationships;
- excessive bureaucracy and red-tape resulting in frustration, inefficiencies and stress;
- use of outdated and inappropriate regulatory frameworks;
- inadequate financial back-up provisions for curriculum implementation.

As this study draws towards a close with individual actors having given their own explanations for their situations I realise that key people in governance and management are 'trapped in their own offices and in their jobs' with little reflection taking place. In the midst of these limitations I shall attempt, in the next section, to bring out specific recommendations for revitalisation so that Zimbabwe can move towards 'a more natural life' in the governance and management of colleges offering technical and vocational education.

### 8.5 Recommendations for Revitalisation

Various recommendations will be made and their implications discussed in the context of the findings, the related theory and issues affecting the effectiveness of governance and management.

#### 8.5.1 Personal Reflection of the Principal

It is imperative for any principal of a technical college to understand the need for self-reflection. According to Daresh *et al.* (1992) self-reflection is a critical skill needed by any principal.

Steyn (1993) supports this notion but underscores the fact that self-reflection only comes as a result of self-awareness in terms of how the principal understands his/her role. Daresh and Playko (1992) compare the preparation of educational leaders with training of candidates for medicine, law and priesthood. They argue that while principals may need training in technical aspects of their job such as management of resources and carrying out staff performance appraisals, other aspects which need to be pursued with equal commitment relate to professional development through personal

formation. This is essentially supporting individual principals in their personal adjustments to their new roles with a view to getting them to understand their weak points and develop into the kinds of leaders they aim to develop. The process will require continued efforts of reminding them to adjust to their ideal roles demanded in the job setting.

I feel that the Ministry should embark on this exercise having observed that none of the universities in Zimbabwe offers a degree on educational leadership and management but rather on educational policy and administration.

#### 8.5.1 Leadership Empowerment

Various leaders in the governance system have no expert power and need to be empowered. Senge (1990) points out that leaders are organisational development facilitators who must know how to identify conflicts, conceptualise them and help people generate creative solutions to the conflicts. Schmuck and Runkel (1994) indicate that in governance people can live with conflicts in the form of emotional struggles and disagreements.

Such unpleasant experiences can actually be turned around and supply the punch and push that is needed in bringing about effectiveness and enhancement of group performance. What is needed is an empowering process of appropriate expertise in the leadership structures of head office and colleges. Leadership empowerment tends to yield professional confidence which is critical in making decisions and in generating a feeling of accountability. The study has shown me a better understanding of people in governance

and based on their limitations, leadership empowerment in the relevant expert area might yield better results.

### 8.5.2 Transformation of Head Office

The attitudes of people in head office will need some transformation. This is not an easy process but Mbigi and Maree's (1995:8) concept of *ubuntu* might be used as a reference point in creating a spirit of personal stewardship to duties, accountability and effectiveness based on the principle of a shared vision and "the spirit of solidarity". As such the bureaucracy becomes a matter of structures and division of labour.

Since the research has helped me to understand problems and issues of governance involving head office I shall make attempts to discuss this report with the permanent secretary (who has requested a copy) and table this recommendation.

### 8.5.3 Review of Legal Instruments

The findings of the case studies have shown that the legislative framework being utilised in the governance of technical institutions are no longer commensurate with the growth, impetus and dynamics of technical and vocational education, as explained in chapter seven. Participants from colleges pointed to the delays in the procurement of training materials. These delays were attributed to the Audit and Exchequer Act and Treasury Instructions which enforced that colleges had to shop around for three quotations and submit them for approval of the lowest quotation by accounts personnel sitting in head office. Revision of such control system was last carried out as

far back as 1979. At that time there was only one small college of technical and vocational education catering for a relatively small group of people and situated close to head office in Harare. At present time management and the rising cost of transport tend to inhibit or impinge on procurement process as pointed out by participants. I therefore suggest a revisit of these legal documents.

The research has shown that the question of staff recruitment is heavily controlled and centralised in terms of the requirements of both the Public Service Act and the Manpower and Development Act. This leaves principals with little room for developing critical leadership skills such as sound judgment, creativity, organisational skills and decision-making. The skills, as supported by the literature review, form a critical requirement for any manager who is serious in bringing about organisational effectiveness. If these regulations are to play the important role they seem to occupy at present I recommend their complete revision.

#### 8.5.5 Review of the Principal's Job Description

In this research a great deal of time was spent in trying to understand if a principal had a clear understanding of his/her role. Results showed that there were varied but narrowly focused perceptions and little understanding of the demands of their core business. In comparing data with the job description that was supplied to me it became evident that the job description was in fact placing great emphasis on issues that were not within the core demands of managing and leading a technical college.

The issue of an appropriate job description in educational management is discussed by Van der Westhuizen (1992). According



to him the biggest challenge of any principal who wishes to be effective is to carry out a periodic self-directed evaluation of his/her performance. In this regard he/she compares his/her previous performance with his/her future achievements against a well delineated job description. In this research I recommend a revisit of the current job description with a view to capturing the salient issues in this complex job.

#### 8.5.6 Participation of Industry through a Shared Vision

The poor relationships between college management and the industrialists exposed in this research is doubtless having a negative impact on technical education and national economic growth. Related theory has explained that individuals who share common goals and common problems should exert some effort to come together and network. Daresh and Playko (1992) point out that coming together for meetings is built on the premise of common problems or common goals. This emphasises the concept of creating a shared vision through networking. As such people do not have to wait for formal meetings but could make efforts of talking to each other on the phone, visiting each other and communicating on issues of mutual concerns rather than waiting for isolated formal agendas.

On appointment of these college advisory councils it may be appropriate to introduce some induction get-together sessions before the official meetings take place. The strength of this is that it encourages people to open up and reveal their concerns, talents or expectations in a cordial environment. As noted much earlier in the research the principal is invariably isolated and lonely in his/her office at the college and he/she rarely gets the opportunity for expressing concerns to other principals who would understand the

issues without placing too much judgment on the principal's performance. My suggestion is that both industrialists and principals should be encouraged to network and communicate as an integral strategy of creating a shared vision and paving way for meaningful collaboration and participation.

#### 8.5.7 Synergetic Leadership of Head Office and Colleges

The relationship between senior officers in head office and college principals is a delicate issue stemming from position power and political power in the bureaucratic system. Theory has shown that the governance models of collegiality tend to yield positive results of effectiveness based on the theories of motivation discussed in chapter two. Attempts should therefore be made to remove the mentality of 'them and us' and replace it with a synergetic approach handling responsibilities enshrined in governance.

According to studies by Schenk (1983) good work relationships based on the principles of synergy are dependent on the invisible creations of the organisational culture formed by the leadership over a period of time. I therefore recommend that the top leadership in head office makes an attempt to remove barriers to cohesion by unifying senior officers between head office and colleges. Norms and values agreed to by the two groups could be tabled for discussion at a periodic performance review workshop. This could be strategised on a yearly basis.

### 8.5.8 Interventions for Governance Responsiveness

Limitations in the effective governance and management of a technical and vocational college have been explained in section 8.4.6 of this chapter. Literature has shown that bureaucracy within the governance system tends to underplay emotions of people and tends to ignore their personal values. In the same vein the political model of governance showed elements of political manipulation thus ignoring the fundamental objectives of interested parties in the organisation.

Given this position I feel that what Bush (1995) has described as the collegiality model of governance would be ideal for Zimbabwe's technical and vocational colleges. This model tends to respect human relations. Literature has failed to show success stories emerging from the use of pure bureaucratic and pure political models. The collegiality model (Bush 1995) could therefore be blended with some aspects drawn from the bureaucratic model (such as a clearly defined division of labour) for precise accountability. The system of governance that I am recommending should enable the college to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to societal and industrial needs.

To move beyond this point I recommend that those issues of limitations in governance (section 8.4.6) be conceptualised through open discussions involving key players in governance and management of colleges. These could take the form of a series of workshops at which specific issues are discussed, solutions suggested and action plans adopted.

## 8.6 Limitations of the Study

a) This research relied heavily on the co-operation of participants whom I had no control over except to stand back and attempt to listen, observe and read reports with a view to understanding their stories. The report is therefore an interpretation of what was said, observed and read in each case study as I visited and interacted with the cases. It therefore emerged that some of the envisaged strategies and time frames which had been planned had to be revised and adaptations made accordingly.

b) Because colleges are dynamic institutions the total picture painted at the time of the research may have changed with the passage of time. In this regard I get the sense that it is possible that certain perceptions and feelings may have shifted in the minds of participants at the time that the report is considered as a tool for use in revitalising the governance and management system.

c) Upon my visit to the third college under investigation I discovered that the bulk of the students had been expelled following a strike action two days before my arrival. I then felt that the 'moral quality' of my interview with students would be compromised by deep feelings of sympathy with colleagues or perhaps a state of fear and shock. As result I decided against the idea of purposefully interviewing students until I bumped into some students accidentally as I was leaving the campus. The ensuing discussion did not take on the format of an in-depth, formal interview as envisaged.

## 8.7 Suggestions for Further Research

As I conclude this report I feel encouraged by calls for a copy of the report from the permanent secretary in the ministry responsible for the three colleges in this study. Presumably the study will be of some use to that ministry. To me the responsiveness of governance and management to the effectiveness of technical and vocational colleges requires some intervention mechanism emerging as it were from the key people interviewed.

One significant value of this multi-case research might be the encouragement of future research into the activities of governance and management which have not received adequate attention in this report. The following areas could be pursued within the Zimbabwean context:

- integration of female students in technical and vocational education;
- the financing system and cost effectiveness in technical and vocational colleges;
- development of a curriculum framework for leadership development of college principals;
- impact of HIV/AIDS on the supply of skilled manpower from vocational and technical colleges.

I believe the whole issue of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges should be revisited with a view to changing the mechanistic approach of management to a more humanistic approach of leadership from a conformist approach to a transformational approach.

## 8.8 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion this study has produced the following outcomes:

- a better understanding of the environment in which governance and management take place in the context of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe;
- a better understanding of the role of a principal;
- a deeper understanding of head office's policies as regards the running of technical colleges and their effectiveness;
- a deeper understanding of problems and issues facing industrialists who sit on college advisory councils;
- a better understanding of government regulations relating to colleges of technical and vocational education.

More importantly for me I have personally learned matters of human relations, relationships through interactions, effective communication and the importance of understanding human behaviour and human feelings. I have also learned that the environment of education is complex and that all interested parties have their own expectations, hence the need for self-reflection as an integral principle of self-growth.

Finally I wish to emphasize that in this research participants were left to construct their own reality. I kept reminding myself about the importance of listening, recording and capturing every word, and thereafter interpret the meanings. I believe this interpretive approach in the form of case studies needs to be promoted in Zimbabwe's university education departments where a quantitative tradition appears to have taken a centre stage in looking at social structures.

This could be happening at the expense of seeking to understand the social reality of people involved in adding value to the system of technical education. This report describes the situation of principals, policy makers and industrialists at its roots.

### 8.9 Post Script: Developments after the Research

As mentioned under limitations above I grant that these colleges are dynamic institution and the people within the system also forever open to change. It seems appropriate then to report briefly on some of the developments which occurred after the completion of this research.

A major outcome of the study was the request by the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology for a draft copy of the report in January 2001. The head of the Ministry expressed keenness to use the report in order to understand the governance and management system that was taking place and implement some of the salient recommendations. As a follow up to this request I managed to interview the permanent secretary, Dr Mambo and further requested to peruse through the annual reports of the three institutions for the periods 1999, 2000 and 2001. The importance of this research to the government was highlighted in chapter one and the desire of the ministry to use the outcomes in its strategic planning process was pointed out by Dr Mambo.

Chapter seven highlighted a lack of understanding of the principal's roles and a lack of leadership skills in two of the colleges. This had led to the adoption of a mechanistic management approach on the part of the principals. Indeed the study reveals that of the principals

interviewed, Mr Raza appeared best equipped to handle the complex task of running a college. In his analysis of this study Dr Mambo reflected on Mr Raza's remarkable performance. As a result Mr Raza was transferred to Harare on promotion from a lower-grade principal to a higher -grade deputy principal at the Harare Polytechnic. Dr Mambo stated:

It's interesting Washie that through your research you discovered that Raza was doing a good management job at Westgate. I reflected and discussed with the Public Service Commission (PSC) that Raza needed to grow out of that environment and help a college that is struggling. Before he left, he set up three satellite training centres of Westgate at Sizinda, Lobengula and Mabutweni. In fact there is a feeling that since Raza left Westgate the college is now lacking direction in leadership.

Another aspect which emerged from the research was the issue of a lack of expert power on the part of senior personnel in the head office. These people's attitudes appeared to be influenced by resource power. Dr Mambo pointed out how he had "revamped" head office staff, removed what he called "dead wood" and replaced them with more vibrant senior staff which coincidentally encompassed a new breed of more female managers in head office. The head of the ministry spoke about improving the communication flow between head office and colleges through a series of workshops and a reduction of excessive bureaucracy. This new stance was confirmed by the new circulars that I read generated from head office but clearly showing a paradigm shift in the tone and choice of words.



Dr Mambo went on to explain to me how Kwekwe was being transformed, having appointed a more vibrant substantive principal (Mr J. Mbudzi). According to Dr Mambo:

The college has introduced more courses. It is now responding to the demands of industry and of course it is better run. The new guy I put there is a self-motivated manager but most importantly he is a leader. No more students unrest and the college is moving in some direction ... I am happy...

The permanent secretary highlighted issues that I had raised in my research concerning inadequate financial back-up for Harare Polytechnic and the authoritative nature of governance and management at Harare Polytechnic. Dr Mambo stated:

Management at the Polytechnic is still authoritative. I am glad that you picked this up. I have now managed to infiltrate the Polytechnic and influenced the principal to work closely with the Student Representative Council (SRC).

The interview responses confirmed the enrolment patterns, the issues and concerns that appeared in the annual reports of the three institutions. As far as I could judge Dr Mambo had also changed his approach to a large extent. He pointed out that “he was now bringing principals to Harare for meetings” more regularly. Also he had embarked on what he described as “man to man talks” with principals as he had realised that their understanding of their roles and demands of their jobs was critical not only to the nation but to his own job performance as well.

The new challenge for all technical colleges was to use the limited resources intelligently and avoid wastages. Dr Mambo expressed the need for colleges to generate their own resources in the form of production of saleable items made whilst students are doing their practicals. To him this was critical in the wake of declining budgets and the general economic problems facing the country. The need to create a new breed of entrepreneurs in colleges was an issue on the national agenda since jobs were dwindling as a result of sporadic closures of companies and the country's (alarming) high inflation rate estimated at one hundred and twenty-two percent (122%) as at May 2002.

Acceptance of the research findings in the three case studies appeared to have generated more interaction between the centre (head office) and the periphery (colleges). Better relationships appear to be emerging. As Dr Mambo embarks on his strategic plan of decentralisation of decision-making authority including management of funds to college heads he confirmed that the ministry would have a strong focus on salient issues that surfaced in this research.

I conclude this post-script report by stating that implementation of issues raised in this research could make a difference to the future of governance and management of technical and vocational colleges in Zimbabwe thus fulfilling the much needed revitalisation. As we bade each other farewell Dr Mambo and I agreed that the technical and vocational system needs a revised set of legislative instruments for effective governance and strategic leadership in colleges which draws on teamwork and creativity. Adair (2000) advises that revitalisation

of an organisation or system requires the generation of special skills to inspire others before embarking 'on the journey to change things'.

From the above it now seems appropriate to add the following items to issues that require further investigation:

- Since an increasing number of employees are female, the question of gender clearly needs urgent attention.
- The whole notion of 'decentralisation' needs to be examined. It seems that Zimbabwe is poised to follow the developed world into management thinking and practice which encourages self-management and personal mastery. Indeed, my recommendations support this tendency. Yet it would be foolish to disregard the views of those who feel that wholesale importation of Western ideas into developing African contexts is problematic (Ndlovu 2000). The principles of *ubuntu* do appear to be in tension with more popular world-wide management thinking. The issue of decentralisation may well need to be re-appraised in the context of local circumstances and cultural imperatives.

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## APPENDICES

### ORDER OF APPENDICES

- A. Request for the Permanent Secretary's permission to carry out this research.
  
- B. Authority to carry out research by the Permanent Secretary for Higher Education and Technology.
  
- C. Request for interview appointments at the three colleges.
  
- D. Permission to use names of participants in the dissertation.
  
- E. Supervisor's intervention in seeking permission to use names.