CONTENTS

Teachers' Attitudinal Variables in the Implementation of the Further-mathematics Curriculum as Correlates of Students' Learning Outcomes
Alausa Yesir Adeleke 1

Arguments for and Against University Expansion in Zimbabwe
Fred Zindi 33

Democratisation of Governance in Tertiary Institutions: A Critical Analysis of Perceived Involvement of the Student Union in the Administration of Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria
M. Olakekan Arikewuyo 50

The 'Good' University Teacher as Perceived by the Students
Alec Ray Matambo and Sesedzai Muriro 60

A Comparative Analysis of Bruner’s and Ausubel’s Views on the Learning Process and Their Implications for Zimbabwe
Munhuweyi Peresuh 73
ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST UNIVERSITY EXPANSION IN ZIMBABWE

Fred Zindi
Faculty of Education
University of Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

In recent years, expansion of university education has been widespread throughout Africa despite the significant economic demands and constraints such expansion places upon government budgets. Both cases for and against university expansion are compelling. This paper examines the rising tide of university expansion, giving the arguments supporting and opposing such a move from economic, social, and political points of view. The need for a national dialogue on the future of tertiary education is suggested in the conclusion.

Background

It was not until independence (1980) that the government of Zimbabwe embarked on an educational policy which was designed to make primary and secondary education available to all children. This policy led to the rapid expansion of education, despite the economic difficulties that followed later, especially during the drought years of 1990 to 1994. In the 1988/89 financial year, 22% of the total government recurrent budget went to education (Williams, 1989).

The first impact of post-independence expansion of the secondary education system was felt in 1984 and 1986 when hundreds of thousands of students who had begun secondary education in 1980 had now completed their ‘O’Levels and ‘A’ levels respectively. The large numbers of secondary school graduates became the tail that began to wag the dog of university enrolment.
The growing mass education at secondary school level therefore began to signify the coming of mass higher education as students begun to compete for the few places that were available at the University of Zimbabwe and in other colleges of higher education (e.g. teachers colleges and polytechnics).

When the Zimbabwean government realised that it could not take into university all those who qualified on completion of their Upper Sixth form studies, it appointed the Williams Commission in 1989 in order to find ways of establishing how the educational needs at university level could be addressed. The commission recommended the establishment of a second University in Zimbabwe's second largest city of Bulawayo, with a bias towards science and technology. It also recommended the establishment of private universities that would operate subject to certain safeguards which would ensure that the interests of the government as well as those of the people of Zimbabwe would be protected.

Subsequent to the publication of this report, the National Council for Higher Education Act was passed in 1990 by the Zimbabwe Parliament. As soon as the Act was passed, the irresistible rising tide of university expansion began due to the insatiable demand for higher education by those who had passed their 'A' levels but could not enter the University of Zimbabwe which had insufficient places to absorb all of them.

Despite budgetary deficits, the government felt compelled to establish a second university. The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) was therefore established in 1992, even before buildings could be put up for it. Students were placed in different locations wherever government had existing buildings. In the same year, the American Methodist Church established Africa University in Mutare while the Seventh-Day Adventist Church decided to turn Solusi College on the outskirts of Bulawayo into a fully-fledged university in 1994.

In 1993, the University of Zimbabwe also established the College of Distance Education which within two years had enroled over 3 000 students.
More recently in 1996, the Bindura University College of Science Education was also established. Zimbabwe continues to ride the crest of the rising tide of university expansion as plans are also underway to turn Gweru Teachers College and Masvingo Teachers College into fully-fledged university colleges offering degrees.

There are also plans to establish the Zimbabwe Open University (Herald, August 19, 1996) which is aimed at serving both Zimbabwe and the international community. The Anglican Church has also made plans to host a private University in Chivhu (Herald, 1996) while plans by the Catholic Church to establish another private university near Harare Airport are at an advanced stage. (Herald, November 22, 1996).

It is against this background that this paper seeks to analyse the implications of university expansion in Zimbabwe. In particular, the article analyses the equity arguments supporting and opposing such expansion.

**Arguments Supporting Expansion**

(a) **General Reasons**

It is a known fact that the government of Zimbabwe, despite economic constraints has made a commitment to expand the availability of education at all levels. It can be argued that an educated nation is a civilised nation. Since independence in 1980, government policy with regard to educational expansion has been based on the premise that education is a fundamental human right as well as being basic to economic growth.

The citizens of Zimbabwe, in pressing the government for educational expansion also see it as the key to employment in the modern economic sector. There has been clearly a compelling range of social and economic advantages that have come to many Zimbabweans as a result of the vitality of the education system. The income-generating potential of activities such as agriculture in the rural areas and other informal sector initiatives
(b) Political Reasons

Another reason used for supporting university expansion is simply political. There has been a lot of pressure on politicians over the last six years from their constituents who wanted places for the growing backlog of ‘A’ level leavers who met the minimum university admission requirements but due to the stiff competition at the University of Zimbabwe could not be offered these places. This type of pressure has opened the way for universities in specific regions by both government and religious organisations. In 1996 the Minister of Higher Education directed the Vice Chancellor at the University of Zimbabwe to work out ways of increasing enrolment due to this pressure which it is feared, could bring political instability. Such a decision, no doubt, has the effect of reducing the pool of disenchanted qualified ‘A’ level school leavers who would otherwise be a social problem to the politicians and society in general.

Many people also believe that expanding the university system will be one way to resolve disharmony among ethnic groups, politicians, scholars, and the clergy as each group has the freedom to build its own university or attend the university that will meet its needs.

(c) Social Reasons

It is often said that increasing student enrolment at universities is an important symbolic act that not only reaffirms the fundamental system of equal rights and justice, but also gives such universities international credibility, especially if careful attention is given to academic standards and the criteria used for access to the university system. Another positive outcome of university expansion, it is argued, are the benefits often associated with a more educated populace. If the country has more trained teachers, an over-supply of doctors, more qualified engineers, accountants, agriculturists etc, greater returns to society would be achieved. Besides, a more informed and knowledgeable society would be created.
have been severely hampered over the years by factors such as unpredictable weather (e.g. the drought of 1992-1993), scarcity of land, unpredictable markets, lack of capital, poor management, poorly implemented policies on rural development, and poor reward structures for those who, although uneducated, wish to work hard. It is also universally accepted that many people who have come from the lower ranks of society have ended up in positions of privilege, status and economic benefits due to the education system which acts as a mechanism for upward mobility.

The need to expand the education system is therefore simply a result of the realisation that a close relationship exists between education and formal sector employment. Other alternatives to wage employment open to most of the uneducated citizens seem to be unreliable. It is also a known fact that remuneration for most wage employment in professional areas which demand educational qualifications often exceeds the income-earning potential of other initiatives. When the government announced free primary education for all in September 1980, even though attendance was not compulsory, enrolments soared from 819,586 in 1980 to 2,251,319 within the first eight years of independence, according to the 1988 Annual Report of the Secretary for Education. Although secondary education was not free, there was even a greater enrolment explosion as numbers soared from just 66,215 at independence to 604,652 in 1987. Although this number began to stabilise after the first ten years of independence, enrolments continued to rise. By 1996 there were 751,349 students enroled in secondary schools throughout Zimbabwe as day scholars while another 78,175 students enroled as boarders (see Table 1).

It can also be argued that by providing mass education to almost all school-going age children in Zimbabwe, a higher output of those who qualify for university intake is yielded and therefore only quality students with high points at 'A' level can be selected from a much wider base. With more and more students entering university, it can also be argued that the elitist ethos often associated with university graduates will eventually be abandoned.
(b) Political Reasons

Another reason used for supporting university expansion is simply political. There has been a lot of pressure on politicians over the last six years from their constituents who wanted places for the growing backlog of ‘A’ level leavers who met the minimum university admission requirements but due to the stiff competition at the University of Zimbabwe could not be offered these places. This type of pressure has opened the way for universities in specific regions by both government and religious organisations. In 1996 the Minister of Higher Education directed the Vice Chancellor at the University of Zimbabwe to work out ways of increasing enrolment due to this pressure which it is feared, could bring political instability. Such a decision, no doubt, has the effect of reducing the pool of disenchanted qualified ‘A’ level school leavers who would otherwise be a social problem to the politicians and society in general.

Many people also believe that expanding the university system will be one way to resolve disharmony among ethnic groups, politicians, scholars, and the clergy as each group has the freedom to build its own university or attend the university that will meet its needs.

(c) Social Reasons

It is often said that increasing student enrolment at universities is an important symbolic act that not only reaffirms the fundamental system of equal rights and justice, but also gives such universities international credibility, especially if careful attention is given to academic standards and the criteria used for access to the university system. Another positive outcome of university expansion, it is argued, are the benefits often associated with a more educated populace. If the country has more trained teachers, an over-supply of doctors, more qualified engineers, accountants, agriculturists etc, greater returns to society would be achieved. Besides, a more informed and knowledgeable society would be created.
Table 1: Summary of Secondary School Enrolment Throughout Zimbabwe in 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>LVI</th>
<th>UVI</th>
<th>SPECIAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>BOARDERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>11994</td>
<td>11762</td>
<td>11478</td>
<td>10981</td>
<td>11434</td>
<td>9953</td>
<td>9589</td>
<td>8563</td>
<td>2207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>19876</td>
<td>16014</td>
<td>16534</td>
<td>13701</td>
<td>14938</td>
<td>11554</td>
<td>12866</td>
<td>8484</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas. Cent.</td>
<td>7933</td>
<td>6329</td>
<td>6923</td>
<td>5244</td>
<td>6538</td>
<td>4296</td>
<td>5197</td>
<td>3171</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi. East</td>
<td>14219</td>
<td>12874</td>
<td>12836</td>
<td>11039</td>
<td>11791</td>
<td>9509</td>
<td>10997</td>
<td>7214</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi. West</td>
<td>11614</td>
<td>9684</td>
<td>10160</td>
<td>8085</td>
<td>9508</td>
<td>7534</td>
<td>7804</td>
<td>5072</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marapi</td>
<td>16836</td>
<td>14226</td>
<td>15019</td>
<td>12455</td>
<td>14506</td>
<td>11485</td>
<td>12477</td>
<td>9219</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat. North</td>
<td>11454</td>
<td>12387</td>
<td>9775</td>
<td>10619</td>
<td>8824</td>
<td>9323</td>
<td>7483</td>
<td>7578</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat. South</td>
<td>6374</td>
<td>6896</td>
<td>5689</td>
<td>6214</td>
<td>4734</td>
<td>5205</td>
<td>3911</td>
<td>3887</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>14995</td>
<td>14613</td>
<td>13446</td>
<td>12500</td>
<td>13340</td>
<td>11428</td>
<td>11046</td>
<td>8765</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113555</td>
<td>104755</td>
<td>101980</td>
<td>90818</td>
<td>94713</td>
<td>79827</td>
<td>80535</td>
<td>63053</td>
<td>6830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education, Secretary's Report of 1996-Summary
University expansion prevents the illusion that higher education should remain the domain of the privileged few. With expansion, equity of access becomes a benefit to those from poor family backgrounds instead of only those from the advantaged.

(d) Economic Reasons

Another view given by those who support university expansion is that it is better to accommodate as many students as possible in order to save the foreign currency that might be spent by those who end up pursuing university education in other countries after failing to get places at local universities. According to Mugabe (1993) the government of Zimbabwe was spending over $163 million in foreign currency every year which was being paid to foreign institutions such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) by Zimbabwean students who had found it difficult to enrol at local universities.

Not only does the education abroad result in the loss of significant foreign currency, but for those students who actually go abroad to seek university education, the chances that they will return to Zimbabwe become diminished. The problem of the 'brain-drain' has often been associated with overseas training particularly when the duration of training or study is long (Maliya-Mkono, Ishumi, & Wells, 1982). It is therefore argued that if students are trained locally, they will most likely seek employment locally on completion of their studies.

From an economic perspective, it is also argued that expansion of universities compels administrators to utilise facilities and human resources that are available more efficiently. With more students, more tuition fees could be collected for the same lectures and the same lecture hours that were given to fewer students in the past, but careful attention needs to be given to quality.
Arguments Opposing Expansion

(a) General Reasons

Although the Williams Report of 1989 recommended the establishment of another university, it also pointed out that for the 1988/89 financial year, 22% of the total government recurrent budget went to education as a result of the expansion that took place after independence. University education in Zimbabwe is heavily subsidised by government. Even those Zimbabwean students in private universities use government grants and loans to pay for their studies. It is therefore argued that university expansion takes a lot of money from the tax-payer and that university education should only be a privilege for those who can afford to pay for it. The most obvious argument against expansion is therefore financial since the money required to subsidise this growth has to be diverted from other important developmental projects or alternatively, it must come from an increased taxation of all salaried workers.

Another argument often levelled against university expansion is that standards will be lowered and that the quality of the graduates will be compromised. As more students are enrolled, the criteria for selection is lowered and more students will fail, write supplementary examinations, repeat, or drop out. This has an adverse effect on resources as academic staff maybe required to do remedial work, more paper-work including writing of extra examinations and other time-consuming tasks may need to be performed. It is often argued that the quantity of students and the quality of education have an inverse relationship.

Expansion may make it difficult for faculties to do a proper screening of students. Because of the large numbers, marking of assignments becomes an almost impossible task. Examination results consequently become unreliable as staff find it difficult to cope with the large numbers.

Mass produced graduates, it is argued, are often ill-prepared to make any significant contributions to the fast changing economic and technological aspects of the Zimbabwean industry. For instance, most graduates leave
university before they have acquired any knowledge on how to use a computer or how to access internet and e-mail due to the fact that their respective universities, due to economic constraints could not afford the acquisition of these facilities from which the students could be trained.

Many universities already operate with a shortage of staff. This in itself creates a problem for expansion as staff are compelled to take on extra students for no extra compensation. This often results in low morale, lack of motivation, and minimised ability to conduct any research on the part of staff. The nonavailability of qualified staff may therefore be the most critical factor militating against the expansion of universities.

(b) Economic Reasons

With expansion, more buildings which include classrooms, dining halls, hostel accommodation, and laboratories will be required. If these are not made available, enrolled students will have to be over-crowded in small lecture rooms and up to six may have to sleep in rooms originally designed for two in the halls of residence.

On completion of their studies, the graduates may find themselves competing for jobs in an already over-crowded labour market. Graduates in fields that the economy is unable to employ often become disenchanted and it is often these who become a strong political force in the same way that the unaccommodated university applicants are.

It is a known fact that an ideal university should have student-staff ratios that will allow some individual attention to the development of research and analytic skills. Lecturers and tutors should have more contact hours with individual students in order to cater for individual needs, but it seems, universities can no longer afford to employ adequate numbers of staff to deal with this important area. By the same token, research boards are no longer properly funded in order to meet the funding of important research which is crucial for national development.
It is not unusual to see only two or three same-titled books available in university libraries which are meant to be read by over 500 students over a short period. Library facilities are simply inadequate mainly due to economic reasons. At the time of writing this article, the University of Zimbabwe was still struggling to computerise its libraries. It is ironical that the same university administration, when considering applications from other colleges for associate or affiliate status, always insists on the institutions having adequate library facilities, yet it does not appear to appreciate its own inadequate facilities.

Some departments in universities, due to lack of funds, have gone for years without photocopying facilities or computers which in this day and age are essential tools of the trade. The photocopying of even important documents such as examination papers and other confidential reports ends up being done by outsiders who have nothing to do with the activities of these departments. Not only is confidential information likely to end up in the wrong hands if this continues, but this practice invariably renders most of these departments inefficient since most of their work is done by people whom they have no control over.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AGRC M</th>
<th>ARTS M</th>
<th>COMM. M</th>
<th>EDUC. M</th>
<th>ENG. M</th>
<th>LAW M</th>
<th>MEDICINE M</th>
<th>SCIENCE M</th>
<th>SOC. ST. M</th>
<th>VET. SC. M</th>
<th>TOTAL M</th>
<th>TOTAL F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDERGRADUATES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees, Diplomas</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POST</strong></td>
<td>202</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>245</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centre for STANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td>2204</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>3152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agric</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Applied**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1996, the University of Zimbabwe had a total enrolment of 7,912 full-time undergraduate and post-graduate students, compared to 7,231 in 1993 while those enroled to study through Distance Education totalled 3,152. The Bindura University College of Science Education, had 121 students making a total of 11,385 students enroled in 1996 (see summary in Table 2). A government directive to increase these enrolment figures in 1997 and 1998 was issued, despite the budgetary deficits which have prevented the expansion and improvement of existing facilities. It is a matter of time before the newly established private universities are faced with similar budgetary deficits.

(c) Political Reasons

It has often been argued that many politicians are advocating the expansion of universities in their home areas or constituencies, not because these universities are desperately needed there, but simply to appease their constituencies in order to get votes and to be seen to be doing something by the electorate. Such expansion, at the expense of the taxpayer, it is argued, is a waste of money and an unnecessary creation of buildings which might end up as white elephants — all in the name of 'development'.

(d) Social Reasons

It is also argued that when too many people hold degrees, the social fabric of society is eroded as the degree holders lose respect of their own cultural and traditional values in favour of Western social ideals. This is probably the reason why most of those with degrees prefer to live in urban centres as opposed to rural areas where the extended family respect for elders and other traditional African values are still the norm. Degree holders, it is argued, become arrogant and lose respect for almost anything that is African.
Conclusion

From the above account, it becomes evident that one of the most serious educational problems faced by the government of Zimbabwe since independence has been how to deal with the demand for education that far exceeds what is available in terms of classroom space. The problem becomes particularly obvious when those who have completed secondary school fail to get university places despite having met university entry requirements. This is also compounded by their failure to get jobs. A few of them end up taking courses in technical and vocational education while others go to teacher-training institutions. The rest are seen loitering in the streets of the country's cities, wondering what to do next. This problem is not isolated to Zimbabwe only. In Botswana the school-leaver problem is a well-known phenomenon (Mautle, 1994). In Kenya, the Presidential working party of 1988 which was commissioned by President Moi directed the Minister for Education and the vice chancellors of the four national universities to work out ways of admitting most of the 13,000 qualified students who had been left out in the selection process. A decision was then made to increase university intake after appeals and pressure from affected parents was brought to bear on Kenyan politicians (Hughes & Mwiria, 1990). In Zimbabwe, while church-related organisations may have established universities for reasons other than merely to expand the university system, the government has welcomed this as a way of relieving itself from the pressure of expanding its own institutions in view of the budgetary deficits. There is no doubt, however, that both government and private university graduates will soon be faced with another kind of pressure, that is the pressure of an economy which creates high-level employment at a rate insufficient to adequately absorb these graduates.

The significant economic demands of expanding educational opportunities for all will inevitably choke out other governmental efforts such as land resettlement, rural development, health delivery for all, and employment creation. However, it is well documented that expansion of mass higher education has become a global phenomenon as has also been seen in Nigeria and India in the past two decades. This has the advantage
of breaking away higher education from its ‘elitist’ tradition but unfortunately, the quality of university education may in the process be compromised through this influx of students. As mentioned earlier, new problems may also be created in the labour market. There is also evidence of decline in the per capita support for universities. Expanding universities, unfortunately, does not always mean expanding employment opportunities.

However, for governments to survive, educational planning becomes a political matter. For this reason, not all planning is rational as it becomes an intense political endeavour that touches upon the government’s legitimacy. No doubt, there is need for a national dialogue to determine the direction which Zimbabwe should take regarding university expansion. There has got to be a way of solving how higher education should be financed in future and what should happen to those school leavers not admitted to higher education. The current system needs to be overhauled in order to accommodate new realities. Experts in the field of education together with policy makers ought to get together this challenge.

References


Mugabe, R. G. (1993, September). Opening speech at the Centre for Distance Education, University of Zimbabwe, Harare.
