

**MAINSTREAMING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN EPISTEMOLOGIES  
AND POLICIES INTO STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION**

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OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN INDIGENOUS  
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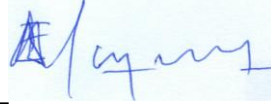
**CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**30 JUNE 2021**

## APPROVAL

As the supervisors of the candidate, we hereby approve the submission of this thesis.

Main Supervisor: Professor Jacob Mapara



Co-Supervisor: Professor Maria Tsvere



## DECLARATION

I declare that **Mainstreaming Indigenous African Epistemologies and Policies into Student Development in Higher Education** is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

**Crispen Mazodze**

**Date:** 30 June, 2021

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crispen Mazodze', written over a light blue horizontal line.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Premised on decolonial theoretical framework this research interrogated the colonial Eurocentric epistemology that underpins student development programmes in higher education and proposes a decolonial paradigm that takes into account mainstreaming epistemologies from the Global South. The aim of this research was to examine and contextualise the contention that student development in post-colonial higher education in the Global South has continued to promote Eurocentrism at the expense of Afrocentric epistemologies. The research was designed as a qualitative study that employed grounded theory methodology focussing on student development practice at three state universities in Zimbabwe which in this study are identified as A, B and C. Research data was collected through in-depth interviews with Student Affairs Practitioners, focus group discussions with Student Representative Council members and analysis of documents. Data were analysed qualitatively through coding of emerging themes during the course of the research process. This was complimented with the use of NVIVO qualitative data analysis software and textual analysis for documentary data. Using the lens of decoloniality, the major focus of the analysis was to determine recognition by the Student Affairs Practitioners of the absence of and the need to prioritise epistemologies of the Global South in student development practice. The research findings indicate that Eurocentric hegemony is pervasive in student development practice in post-colonial higher education in the Global South. Theorising on this complexity, the research identified mainstreaming *hunhu/ubuntu* values as a practical approach to address these effects of onto-epistemological coloniality. The researcher recommends the conceptualisation and designing of student development programmes that imbue cultural values and norms of indigenous peoples of the Global South. To guide this process the researcher developed the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model that imbues *hunhu/ubuntu* values. This approach inspires epistemic justice by recentring epistemologies of the Global South for onto-epistemic self-determination.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife Otilia and our four children Tendai, Tariro, Tarisai and Tawananyasha in appreciation of their love, encouragement and support.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ADB:	African Development Bank
BUSE:	Bindura University of Science Education
CDU:	Curriculum Development Unit
CUT:	Chinhoyi University of Technology
DOS:	Dean of Students
ESAP:	Economic Structural Adjustment Policy
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GoZ:	Government of Zimbabwe
GZU:	Great Zimbabwe University
HEI:	Higher Education Institution(s)
IFI:	International Financial Institutions
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
LID:	Leadership Identity Model
MHTEISTD:	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development
NDS1:	National Development Strategy 1
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
SAD:	Student Affairs Division
SAPs:	Student Affairs Practitioners
SAYWHAT:	Student and Youths Working on Reproductive Health Action Team
SCM:	Social Change Model
SEM:	Social Enculturation Model
SRB:	Strong Rural Background
SRC:	Student Representative Council
SU:	Students' Union
UZ:	University of Zimbabwe

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Explicating the importance of mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing, cultural values and languages into student development in higher education, this study calls for the decolonisation of student development epistemology. This research is premised on the context of post-colonial university education in Africa and other countries in the Global South where due to coloniality, indigenous epistemologies, policies and languages are inferiorised and ‘othered’ and invisibilised in student development programming. The research focuses on student affairs practitioners in order to understand how, and the extent to which they apply a decolonial approach in student development practice. It also enlists the views of student leaders on the need to decolonise student development programmes. This is achieved through in-depth interviews with student affairs practitioners and focus group discussions with Student Representative Council members as well as analysis of documents.

Resonating with this call is the resurgent impetus for the revitalisation of indigenous knowledges, cultures and languages as enunciated by the Zimbabwe government policy imperatives such as the Education 5.0 and the National Development Strategy<sup>1</sup> (NDS1). In the academic frontier, the decolonial and post-colonial scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, 2018, 2020); Mapara (2020); Mungwini (2017); Mbembe (2015); Odora- Hoppers (2009) and Ngugi (1986, 2009) have amplified the demand for the decolonisation of knowledge production and legitimation in higher education. Several scholars have expounded on the need to decolonise the university in Africa and free it from Western epistemic and cultural hegemony (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020, 2018; Mampane *et al.*, 2018, Mamdani, 2016; Mbembe, 2015; Boidin *et al.*, 2012 ). While academia has taken great strides in leading the epistemic and cognitive justice battle in the construction, reconstruction and legitimation of knowledge in higher education, student development (SD) has lagged behind (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). The foregoing submission indicates that there is an urgent need for an epistemic shift to the scope and function of student development (SD) in higher education in order to challenge Western epistemic and ontological hegemony which has led to the production of graduates who shun their culture, norms and values.

Globally, higher education is viewed as playing a key role in national development because that is where future national leaders and policy makers are largely trained, mentored and groomed (Tsvere & Nyaruwata, 2012).

However, as Odora-Hoppers (2007) aptly observes, the curriculum in most African universities is designed to socialise students on Western culture so that they become foundation stones for a new European neo-colonial order. This stresses the need for relevant SD programming that imbues indigenous African epistemologies and policies to drift away from the current template which produces graduates who despise their African heritage by aping Western culture, norms, and values.

The current struggles for decolonisation in Africa are mainly centred on the epistemological frame thus making universities battlefronts of the struggle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The decoloniality movement is quite equivocal on its fight for the decolonisation of institutions of higher learning with particular focus on knowledge production and reproduction, the disciplines, pedagogy and institutional cultures. This study is predicated on the call to decolonise student development in universities and the researcher argues that decolonial theory provides most appropriate framework to liberate it from racism, culturecides, epistemicides and identicides fostered on it by colonialism and coloniality. Decoloniality, for that reason, seeks to deepen and widen the horizons of decolonisation because of the failure of political independence to destroy the metaphysical empire. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, 2020, 2021) colonialism did not end with the attainment of political independence from European imperial powers, it resurrected itself through a system called coloniality. He describes coloniality as epistemic domination which exhibits itself in the form of Eurocentric hegemony over culture, languages as well knowledge production and validation. Due to coloniality, this research identified student development as space that needs to be decolonised owing to the over-representation of Eurocentric epistemologies and the absence of African indigenous ways of knowing. Non-Eurocentric epistemologies have been silenced and treated as the other which is inferior and not worth recognition.

The researcher concurs with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) who observes that the dismantlement of direct colonisation brought about a false sense of independence:

This is because the domains of culture, the psyche, the mind, language, aesthetics, religion and many others have remained colonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 13).

To illustrate this point further, as a student at the University of Zimbabwe in the late 1980's the researcher observed students being at pains trying to imitate Euro-American tones by attempting to speak through the nose and they would unashamedly call themselves the 'Nose Brigades'.

This group looked down upon those who would not produce the nasal tones in their speaking and they derisively called them the VSRBs and 'SRBs' implying they had very strong rural backgrounds. With the movement of time the 'Nose Brigades' lost steam and the group metamorphosed into what Mavhunga (2006) refers to as 'Salads'. It is a term that is borrowed from the culinary sciences where salads are a mixture of different kinds of vegetables or vegetables and fruits such that one cannot clearly identify the mixture either as fruits or vegetables. As the name suggests 'Salads' have no clear identity, they are neither culturally Africans nor Europeans. They are also not accepted by both sides. This clearly shows that coloniality and neo-liberalism have led to the destruction of African people's culture, language and civilisation, resulting in what Meharg (2001) terms 'placelessness' and metaphysical identicide. Therefore, the targeting for destruction of African higher education students' cultures, languages and epistemologies has resulted in a subtle form of genocide called identicide. This form of cultural and onto-epistemic colonisation is implemented through the guise of SD models funded by neo-liberal corporates and organisations such as Boost-Enactus, Toastmasters, Lions, Rotaract and Debate to mention just a few.

Mapara (2017) argues that African languages and cultures in higher education in the Global South continue to perish because of Eurolingualism and Euroculturalism which he defined as the dominance of European languages and cultures respectively. Mapara (2017) further elucidates that there is so much self-hate among Africans to the extent they aspire to be whites in skin, hair and languages for example, through skin bleaching, the use of hair weaves and extensions and the use of fake accents as alluded to above. The sense of being black is seen as something shameful that has to be escaped from, which Mapara (2017, p. 6) describes as "the contest to escape from blackness because people are not happy about their black identity." Colonialism forced blacks to internalise whiteness as better than being black and the situation has persisted in the post-independence era with the youths including university students shunning blackness and aspiring to be whites in terms of language, identity and lifestyle. This creates a situation among the African youths which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) has termed ontological exile, denoting that one is forced to live outside one's self, outside one's knowledge and outside one's language.

Academia has taken the lead in the struggle against coloniality, for example Ngugi (1986, 1993, 2009) advocates for the ‘decolonising of the mind’ through ‘moving the centre’ of knowledge production to Africa. Others like Gutto (2017) and Mbembe (2016) have championed the cause to decolonise the university in Africa while Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) advocates for epistemic freedom and ontological decolonisation. The decolonisation discourse will be unpacked in detail in Chapter Three. Student development in higher education has remained silently wrapped in the ‘swaddling clothes’ of coloniality with Student affairs practitioners enjoying the comfort of Eurocentric programmes. This has led them failing to interrogate their impact on student acquisition of values and identity consciousness. Student Affairs practitioners have continued to operate under the straight jacket of colonial modernity which promotes Western epistemologies. The out of class programmes meant to hone out grooming and leadership skills for students in most institutions of higher learning in Sub-Saharan Africa have continued to be driven by neo-liberalism and globalisation anchored on Euro- American theories and models with little regard to indigenous knowledges and cultures. Though some of these theories may be relevant, their presentation as holding universal truths cannot continue unchallenged. Madambi and Mangena (2016) opine that African higher education student SD practitioners and administrators need to critically engage with the influx of student development theories from the west and grapple with the designing of home-grown models to ensure the cultural appropriateness of the adopted theories and models. Decolonising the current scope, culture and function of SD is accordingly imperative. Packed in this clarion call is the emerging notion that indigenous African epistemologies are crucial to holistic student development in higher and tertiary education. It is within this purview that this study is being undertaken to enhance the call for a moral, cognitive and epistemic reconstruction of knowledge within the domain of student leadership development.

This research shows the significance of a decolonial approach in SD practice in the framework of contested spaces in a neo-liberal university environment. The study brings to the fore some of the challenges faced by Deans of Students (DOS) and Student Affairs Practitioners (SAPs) in embedding African indigenous epistemologies in student leadership development programmes inspired by decoloniality theory. This was achieved through an analysis of key university documents such as policies and ordinances relating to student discipline, residence life and mission statements, semi-structured interviews with SAPs who include Deans of Students (DOS), On and Off Campus Life Directors, Wardens and Counsellors focussing attention on their philosophical approaches in implementing out of class student activities. The

researcher also held focus group discussions with Student Representative Council (SRC) Presidents and Secretary-Generals to determine student leaders' views on mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies in SD in higher education.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

An often-forgotten problem confronting many universities in Sub-Saharan African countries is the absence of non-European epistemologies, languages and cultures in the curriculum including student development theory. This has led to a crisis of social identity and moral bankruptcy among students which leads to the production of graduates who lack identity, integrity and cultural consciousness. Eurocentrism remains a key instrument of Western cultural reproduction in student development leading to epistemicides and culturecides whereby African epistemologies, cultures and languages are marginalised and invisibilised. There is a critical deficiency of literature to guide the decolonisation of SD programmes in higher education in Zimbabwe and other Sub-Saharan African countries. SAPs end up depending solely on Eurocentric models. This results in the silencing and negation of African epistemologies, cultural values and languages in student development. Marginalisation and invisibilisation of indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD goes against the grain of Education 5.0 and the National Development Strategy 1 policy imperatives.

This study approaches the issue from an epistemological perspective, propounding that student development should be decolonised and should be anchored on the African world view and epistemologies such as *hunhu/ubuntu* to resonate well with both the practitioners and students. Although existing literature proves that SD has been the subject of other previous studies e.g. challenges faced by student affairs practitioners in Zimbabwe (Madambi & Mangena, 2016) there is a paucity of literature that examines these constructs from a decolonial perspective and how embedding indigenous epistemologies and policies may contribute to certain student development outcomes.

It has not been ascertained how imparting indigenous ways of knowing will contribute to student leadership outcomes. Therefore, this study is designed to fill in this gap.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The overarching aim of this study was to determine whether student affairs practitioners were engaging in decolonial student development programming with Zimbabwe as a case study. This was premised on the realisation of the enduring prevalence of coloniality in student

development in higher education in Zimbabwe. In spite of numerous efforts to address student development epistemological and pedagogical deficit issues, the Eurocentric hegemony on student development epistemology has remained pervasive and students continue to imbibe Western cultural values and epistemologies. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) decoloniality is a liberatory project aimed against the Eurocentrism's epistemological hegemony in the Global South and it is oriented towards the creation of non-dominative epistemological co-existence. Therefore, the research questions of this study were designed to explore whether student affairs practitioners were mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies in student development pedagogy.

The core research question underpinning the research was: How can indigenous African epistemologies and policies be embedded into SD in higher education? This was followed by the sub-questions below.

1. Do Student Affairs Practitioners (SAPs) in Zimbabwean universities engage in decolonial approaches in student development programmes?
2. What are the perceptions of SAPs and Student Representative Council (SRC) on mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing into student development in Zimbabwean higher education?
3. What are the problems faced by SAPs in embedding indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD in Zimbabwean higher education?
4. What intervention strategies can be adopted to decolonise SD epistemology by embracing African indigenous epistemologies and policies?

These research questions were by no means exhaustive or all-encompassing to cover all research questions compelling current research questions on the need to decolonise SD epistemology in higher education. However, they provided a satisfactory guide to the study on embedding African indigenous epistemologies into SD theory.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The research questions were underpinned by the following objectives:

1. To determine if SAPs are engaging in decolonial practices in student development in Zimbabwean higher education.

2. To evaluate the perceptions of SAPs and student leaders on mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing into student development in Zimbabwean higher education.
3. To analyse the problems faced by SAPs in embedding indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD practice.
4. To develop a student development model that infuses *hunhu/ubuntu* and Eurocentric epistemologies.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study sought to address the question of epistemic and cognitive injustice in student leadership development by amplifying the call for the adoption of indigenous African epistemologies thus fill in the current gap in the design and implementation of SD programmes in higher education. The research also sought to contribute to the achievement to the requirements of Education 5.0 and National Development Strategy 1 policies by developing a student development model that imbues indigenous culture, epistemologies and languages.

Determining the epistemological and cultural experiences that shape students' leadership development and civic skills acquisition is important for higher and tertiary education institutions particularly student affairs practitioners, university management and students. Therefore, the importance of this study lies in its theoretical and applied utility value to these stakeholders.

#### **1.5.1 Deans of Students and other Student Affairs Practitioners**

Student affairs' key result area emphasises on developing a holistic student therefore, identifying the values and epistemologies that shape that development is crucial to achieving this objective. At theoretical level the study is expected to contribute immensely on embedding indigenous philosophies in SD and at a practical level the utility value of this study lies in its attempts to examine policy issues and challenges faced by practitioners in mainstreaming indigenous African epistemologies into SD and proffer possible remedies. It is hoped that this research will be of great practical value to Deans of Students and other student Affairs Practitioners in providing a model to enrich SD through embedding indigenous ways of knowing. The outcome is the development of student leaders endowed with *hunhu/ubuntu* values of respect, decency, humility, tolerance, honesty, compassion, togetherness and dignity (Mapara, 2013). Research that examines the way students develop as leaders, especially



focussing on the epistemologies and values that shape their experiences is in sync with the scope of work of student affairs practitioners.

### **1.5.2 University Management**

Leadership development is a key focus area in institutions of higher education as clearly enunciated in their mission statements (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Komives, Mainella, Longerbeam, Osteen & Owen, 2006). Historically, the role of universities and colleges reflects a strong focus on leadership and civic skills development (Soria, Fink, Lepkowski & Snyder, 2013). This study will be beneficial to the universities' senior management in their efforts to develop ethical and responsible present and future leaders by developing appropriate policies. Co-curricular activities are currently not treated as core business of the university and this affects resource allocation. Out of class student engagement programmes are not prioritised in budget allocation and timetabling. The researcher hopes that empirical evidence from this study will serve as an eye opener on the importance of SD programmes to universities' management and thus positively influence their perceptions in decision-making.

Further, as highlighted in the preceding section, vast amounts of resources are used to run higher education with the aim of training the youths to be future leaders of communities. Therefore, universities are increasingly required to be accountable to communities in which they exist through the production of graduates with *hunu/ubuntu* values.

This study which is premised on how co-curricular outcomes influence leadership development will help student affairs practitioners to justify their requests for more resources and may influence university management to offer more resources to programmes that contribute to leadership development.

### **1.5.3 Students**

It is hoped that this study will provide the optics which may contribute to self-introspection by students. This should hopefully help them to mould themselves into ethical, accountable and responsible self-leaders who are conscious of their identity and destiny on campus, off campus and in their communities.

#### **1.5.4 Academics**

This study is expected to open new frontiers of knowledge in the domain of student development, and act as a stimulus for academics and student development theorists to conduct further research on decolonising student development in higher education in the Global South.

### **1.6 Context of the Study**

The purpose of this section is to present the historical development and the function of SD development in higher education in general and its importation to the African continent. Further, the section analyses the impact of globalisation and neo-liberalism on student development and higher education within the context of sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe in particular.

#### **1.6.1 Student Development in Higher Education**

Student development has been defined as the level of engagement that students devote to college experiences within curricular and co-curricular activities (Tinto, 2017). The focus of SD is on designing programmes and activities that are aimed at helping students acquire core values that will shape their adult lives, their development of a stable identity, moral and spiritual values, leadership and interpersonal skills (Astin, 2005; Long, 2012a). Some studies indicate that the purpose of student development in higher education is to develop students' psycho-motor and affective skills as well as fostering leadership transformation and cultural consciousness (Magolda & Astin, 1993; Astin, 2005; Tinto, 2017). In the African higher education context, studies indicate that student development is a growing practice with special focus on psycho-social, identity and leadership development (Adjei and Amoako, 2021).

Therefore, SD can be described as the *sine qua non* for the existence of Student Affairs departments in institutions of higher learning; hence universities have purposefully designed formal and non- formal activities to enhance the acquisition of leadership skills (Brown, Desai & Elliot, 2020). Several studies that have examined the impact of SD on students' college experiences have proved that it plays a key role on students' acquisition of civic skills, moral development and character building (Astin, 2005; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea, 2008; Long, 2012b) Other studies have also corroborated these findings indicating that student involvement in out of class student development programmes positively influences their acquisition of morals, ethics, values and leadership skills (Dugan, 2006).

Soria, Fink, Lepkowski and Snyder (2013) opine that the key to enhancing SD among university students is to unlock experiences that are intentional, involving and developmentally targeted. Within the context of out of lecture room and tutorial sessions experiences, leadership development and civic engagement skills are honed (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999; Dugan, 2006). Dugan and Komives (2007) expound that students who are engaged in leadership learning activities have exhibited fundamental growth in four significant domains namely; accountability, self-leadership development, civic engagement and community orientation skills. Furthermore, research has shown that students who participate in out of class student development activities gain increased chances of academic achievement and growth in personal values related to social transformation when compared to those who shy away from engaging in these pursuits (Astin, 2005; Dugan, 2006).

From both historical and contemporary perspectives the education and development of future leaders has served as a core function of university education (Dugan & Komives, 2007). In view of this, universities the world over are increasingly required to be answerable to the communities in which they exist in as far as graduate social and leadership attributes are concerned. It is increasingly becoming imperative for higher education institutions to equip their students with leadership and social values so that they become relevant to their communities (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2006). From the foregoing discussion the researcher argues that SD practitioners are best positioned to influence neophytes in their transitional life stages where they make important career decisions and forge directions concerning their future (Posner, 2004). Therefore, one of the unique challenges of student development practitioners is to train a generation of future leaders who value their culture, norms and values in order for them to be relevant to their societies.

Komives, Mainella, Longerbeam, Osteen and Owen (2006) posit that SD is a process which influences the transformation of students and help in widening the scope of their leadership capabilities. Given this background, leadership training is a significant factor in designing out of class student development programmes. Delgado, Reche, Lucena & Díaz (2013) contend that SD is a process which makes significant transformation in the student's cognitive and affective domains. Posner (2004) adds that leadership development empowers students to mature and develop toward greater levels of leadership complexity, integration and proficiency over a period of time. Universities come under heavy criticism when students are found lacking in appropriate and relevant attitudes as well as behaviour during and after college.

Eddy and Murphy (2000) aver that many college students ruin their future careers with dishonest and irresponsible behaviour such as cheating in examinations, drunken driving, jay-walking, to mention but a few. Eddy and Murphy (2000) also observe that these students are graduating with a paper degree on the one hand and an inability to function in the real world on the other. As such, they ruin not only their future careers but also themselves, their families and their communities due to their lack of self-discipline and direction. In Shona they would describe such graduates as “*Vakaenda kuchikoro asi havana kudzidza*” literally translated as “They went to school but they are not learned.” This sad scenario stresses the need to develop a university student development culture that is informed by indigenous epistemologies like *hunhu/ubuntu* that cements the values of respect, caring, honesty and integrity.

As a student affairs practitioner in one of the state universities in Zimbabwe the researcher has often questioned the efficacy of some programmes on student leadership and character formation. The researcher has been left wondering whether the out of class learning activities are achieving the desired results.

This has been necessitated by the observation that student leaders plunder funds under their stewardship, for example Student Union (SU) and club funds. Further, the violent contestation for Student Representative Council (SRC) posts, often with the help of former SRC leaders who are members of the country’s main political parties is a pointer to the failure of out of class student engagement programmes. The contest for SRC posts in universities in Zimbabwe portrays a worrying scenario where contestants would strive to win the elections as a matter of life and death, or by hook and crook. This sad situation attests to the need for the inclusion of indigenous values such *hunhu/ubuntu* into SD programmes obtaining in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe.

This example of leadership deficit is echoed by Baloyi (2011) cited in Madambi and Mangena (2016:6) who notes:

When student leaders are elected into office, before it is long, they master how to book university cars to travel around the country, how to host useless events which add no value to their learning (Madambi & Mangena, 2016, p. 6).

In concurrence with Baloyi’s (2011) observation, the researcher has witnessed situations where the SRC leaders use Students’ Union (SU) funds to hold music shows for first year students which they call ‘gold rush bashes’. The ‘gold rush’ implies scramble amongst senior male

students for first year female students whom they ‘bash’ i.e. they sexually abuse the girls. Further, funds raised through such shows are never accounted for.

The student leaders would defend such irresponsible and reprehensible behaviour as part and parcel of their privileges and perks. This elitism and culture of entitlement proves that institutions of higher learning are producing leaders who do not have desirable attributes of *hunu/ubuntu* hence the need to launch an epistemic decolonisation of leadership development programmes in higher education.

The philosophy informing SD programmes in most higher education institutions (HEIs) is neo-liberal and its function is to instil Anglo-Saxon cultural values into students. This observation supports Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015) assertion that the colonial rulers might have left but their system remains in place through cultural imperialism. In the same breadth Ngugi (1989) in one of his literary masterpiece *Matigari* describes such scenario as leading to the production of ‘John Boys’ who look down upon their culture and crave for Western values. Under this scenario imparting western culture is being equated to grooming ladies and gentlemen. Therefore, the call to decolonise student development in higher education and mainstream African indigenous epistemologies needs to intensified.

The researcher opines in this thesis that while student leadership development is a worthwhile programme, it is imperative that policy planners should question whose knowledge informs SD programming in their institutions and for what purpose and with what results? Such interrogation should lead to a planned programme of decolonisation of the neo-liberal SD programmes currently being used by bringing on board non-European ways of knowing.

### **1.7 Student Development: A global perspective**

Long (2012) asserts that the Student Affairs Division in each university encompasses professionals who educate predominantly outside the classroom to ensure wholesome education of the student i.e. development of student’s body, mind and soul. Mandew (2003) expounds that globally student development in most higher education institutions (HEIs) is practised under the Student Affairs Division which is mandated to provide students with co-curricular programmes and services in support of the broader higher education experience. The Student Affairs Division consists of several units that provide services to students and these services *inter alia* include Student Accommodation, On and Off Campus Life, Counselling,

Health, Student Development, Catering, Sports, Chaplaincy and Disability Services, Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) services (Mandew, 2003; Long, 2012).

SD matured into professional practice grounded in theory in the 1980's and 1990's. However, it should be noted that SD theories that were developed then and which have continued to inform SD today were designed with the white male undergraduate in mind. This racial and gender-biased frame underpinning SD is still alive though some universities in the developed world have expanded their out of class learning programmes to cater for gays, lesbians and transgender students. For example in accommodation there are calls for same sex halls of residences and sharing of same bath rooms and public toilets for male and female students on campus (Komives *et al.*, 2006). It is important to note that higher education policy planners globally have contrived to expose students to planned developmental activities outside the classroom that compliment intellectual development. However, student development theory has been criticised for its Eurocentric origination that marginalises non-Western epistemologies and values. The following sections discuss the genealogy of student development in sub-Saharan African higher education with Zimbabwe as a case study.

### **1.8 SD in higher education in Sub-Saharan African countries**

Universities in most sub-Saharan African countries were introduced as direct imports from higher education in the colonial power. Therefore, university structures, the disciplines and co-curricular activities were designed using templates from the west and for some time these universities were affiliated to universities in Britain, France, Portugal and the United States of America. The co-curricular activities are structured and co-ordinated in a similar fashion by the Student Affairs departments. Higher education was introduced to train African elites who would assist in colonial administration. Hence the academic and co-curriculum was designed to promote western civilisation at the expense of African culture and indigenous knowledges (Mandew, 2003). As has already been alluded to, this resulted in the death of African cultures, epistemologies, values and identities.

This trend has continued after the gaining of political independence due to neo-colonialism and globalisation. Culture is the carrier of a people's moral, ethical and aesthetic values while values are the embodiment of a people's consciousness as a community (Ngugi, 1993; Mapara, 2009). Therefore, SD programmes in developing countries which have remained rooted in western epistemologies and values need to be decolonised so that higher education aims of

producing well-rounded graduates who are conscious and relevant to their society's needs can be achieved.

Student development focussing on grooming and leadership training has continued to rely on the western paradigm that is practised through clubs, societies and student governance structures that promote western civilisation at the expense of indigenous knowledges and cultures. This has seen the continuation of the colonial agenda of destroying indigenous epistemologies, values and languages. As outlined above this leads to the production of graduates who shun their identity, culture, values and languages.

Citing the South African higher education example, Magoqwana (2018) expounds that decolonisation has to be understood in the context of misrecognition of African ontologies in the academy and institutional cultures of the universities. Magoqwana (2018) further argues that higher education should delink itself from global epistemic coloniality by incorporating indigenous knowledges to enhance its value and purpose in society. In the same breadth, Grosfoguel (2011, p. 5) propounds that universities in the Global South are “producing natives of nowhere” because they are churning out graduates who are elitist, egoistic and who do not fit in their communities.

This proves that higher education in the Global South just like in other countries that experienced colonialism is struggling to form its own identity which is different from the one which was bestowed to it by colonialism. Magoqwana (2018) opines that this state of affairs resulted in the emergence in South Africa of the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ protest movement which advocated for the decolonisation of the universities’ iconography. The Rhodes Must Fall movement agitated for the removal of the statue of Rhodes from the University of Cape Town because its presence induced into them a sense of humiliation because it was a constant reminder to them of an image of a person who harassed and tortured what the name ‘Black’ stands for while he was alive (Mbembe, 2016). This scenario at the University of Cape Town mirrors the prevailing situation in most universities built by the colonialists in Africa and this is the context in which SD occurs. If the Rhodes Must Fall movement clamoured for the decolonisation of buildings and the campus environment, then the call for the decolonisation of SD is not a frivolous matter because it is the platform that shapes the student’s character, morals, values and identity consciousness.

As already alluded to, SD in most African universities is a replica of that of Europe and America and this has prompted the researcher to carry out this study in order to revitalise the zeal to embed indigenous ways of knowing in university co-curricular education.

## **1.9 Student Development in Zimbabwean higher education**

This section looks at SD in Zimbabwean higher education from the period when the first university was established by colonial administrators as the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It traces its historical and evolutionary developments but mainly focussing on their impact on SD. Though the university underwent several historical epochs prior to independence it remained an extension of British colonial rule and cultural hegemony. In the post- independence era, the university changed its name to the University of Zimbabwe and incubated the project of building more universities from only one in 1980 to the present twelve state universities. The section also analyses the impact of neo-liberalism and globalisation on SD in Zimbabwean higher education.

### **1.9.1 Overview**

The establishment of the University of Zimbabwe (then University of Rhodesia) as the first institution of higher learning in Zimbabwe was largely based on the British model since it was an affiliate of the University of London (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). As in other HEIs in developing countries, the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now University of Zimbabwe) was established for the purpose of advancing British colonial and cultural interests. Therefore, the curriculum was designed in a way that ensured the production of graduates who looked down upon African culture and knowledge systems (Mavhunga, 2006). Against this background the Cecil John Rhodes Trust established a scholarship that was meant to promote the creation of an African elite class that was Western in everything except colour. Realising the importance of out of lecture room learning activities the Trust outlined that as a pre-requisite, beneficiaries were expected not only to possess literary excellence but also looked at each applicant's character and social skills. Atkinson cited in Mavhunga (2006), notes that no student would be selected unless he/she showed fondness of sports such as cricket and rugby as well as participating in clubs such as Debate and Toastmasters. The co-curricular activities mentioned above were intended to buttress the notion of the supremacy of British culture in the psyche of beneficiaries (Mavhunga, 2006). It is noteworthy that during the colonial period in Zimbabwe blacks who left the country to study in Britain were regarded as British citizens.



This was a deliberate policy to alienate the educated elite from their cultural roots so as to create a class that would be used to perpetuate their interests even after decolonisation.

This same approach has persisted in post-independence Zimbabwe to all would-be beneficiaries of the Rhodes scholarship and other British funded scholarships such as the Chevening studentship. Therefore, students were inculcated with norms and values which were in keeping with the British middle class and there was total disregard for indigenous epistemology as reflected in the curricular practices. The aim was to develop an African exclusive class which looked with disdain on its cultural background and black identity by adopting western values.

Odora-Hoppers (2007) notes that Western countries have continued to dangle the carrot of scholarships to students in developing countries as a way controlling the minds of upcoming bureaucrats of these countries. In this regard it is important to note that despite strained political relations between Zimbabwe and Britain, the number of the beneficiaries of the Chevening and Rhodes scholarships has increased over the past few years. The beneficiaries of these scholarships mainly pursuing post-graduate studies are required to undertake their studies in Britain and other countries in the Global North. This illustrates the perpetuation of the Western agenda of domination and exploitation through the creation of a neo-colonial and politically compliant class (Sitwala, 2018). In her definition of the neo-colonial elite, Sitwala (2018) includes the political leadership, members of the judiciary, captains of industry and the businessmen and women as well as religious leaders. These groups of people constitute the leadership of a country and hence the significance of epistemic decolonisation in higher education because that is where the national leadership are trained.

An analysis of SD documents on websites of several universities in Zimbabwe shows that programmes designed to promote learning outside the classroom have generally followed a hybrid of American and British models which advance the neo-colonial interests of the former colonial power ([www.cut.ac.zw](http://www.cut.ac.zw); [www.buse.ac.zw](http://www.buse.ac.zw); [www.msu.ac.zw](http://www.msu.ac.zw), [www.gzu.ac.zw](http://www.gzu.ac.zw)). In the same perspective, the Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999 popularly known as the Nziramasanga Commission revealed that Zimbabwean higher education was Eurocentric and educational administrators found themselves entangled by the bi-polar tensions between Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism (Mavhunga, 2006).

Madambi and Mangena (2016) posit that lip service is being paid to educational reforms aimed at making student development Afrocentric while seriously indulging in the promotion of European culture. In the realm of SD this is realised through student clubs that are funded by agents of neo-liberalism. This neo-liberalism is further entrenched by the fact that most students make trips to western capitals and not to those of fellow African countries. This means that Africans hardly appreciate one another. It is therefore not surprising that SD programmes in HEIs have continued to be modelled along the clubs format with clubs such as Debate, Toastmasters, Lions as well as the neo-liberal funded Boost-Enactus and Global Leaders Forum which are always dominating. From an experiential position the researcher has noted that clubs like Toastmasters and Debate have perpetuated the linguicides, valuecides and epistemicides because the participants are groomed to be models in speaking the 'Queen's language' which is English and exhibiting western values. These clubs promote British middle-class culture because Toastmasters serves to perfect the speaking of the Queen's language while in Debate; the British parliamentary system is used as the model. The fact that the global competitions for these clubs are held in Britain or its two former dominions with predominantly white populations i.e. New Zealand and Australia points to their neo-imperialistic designs.

World competitions for Boost-Enactus and Global Leaders Forum which are innocently portrayed as hi-tech- entrepreneurial skills training clubs are held in the capitals of global capitalism like London, New York, Silicon Valley and Berlin. Students from the Third World countries that qualify for these competitions are booked into families of corporate leaders of these capitals where they supposedly would be initiated into the global corporate leadership culture. The researcher strongly contends that the true purpose of these clubs is to train obedient new epistemic followers who will continue to front the neo-colonial interests of the global capitalism. This type of SD cultivates in students a sense of denial of their cultural heritage, destroys their sense of self pride, identity and consciousness as Africans. To compound the problem most HEIs in Zimbabwe have relegated life and soft skills development to be done informally through the Student Affairs Divisions (SAD). This has resulted in the production of graduates who lack *hunhu/ubuntu*. The case of a UZ student leader known as Warlord Chakaredza epitomises this lack of *hunhu/ubuntu* for his agitation for alcohol-laden violence "through smashing windows of the dining hall to protest against poor quality food" (Hodgkinson, 2013, p. 879). Violence and destruction of property has no place in society and student leaders should be at the forefront of preaching non-violence. Zimbabwean higher

education has experienced violent student demonstrations which have sometimes resulted in unnecessary loss of lives (Hodgkinson, 2013).

In Shona there is a proverb which says “*Musha unovakwa namatare*” literally translated as “a home or village is built through sitting down and discussing issues and not through war.” This justifies calls for the embedding of *hunhu/ubuntu* values into SD in higher education with regard to its epistemological and philosophical underpinnings, function and purpose.

SD practised in post-colonial Zimbabwe cannot continue to be the frontier for the promotion of European epistemologies at the expense of indigenous knowledges as this is at cross purposes with heritage-based education which is being fronted by the government through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD). The strength of imparting students with their cultural values lies in its capacity to equip students with lifelong communal responsibility and interpersonal relationships as encapsulated in the *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy. As highlighted above, higher education in Zimbabwe is caught within the web of Afrocentrism versus Eurocentrism in SD while at the same time grappling with the effects of neo-liberalism and globalisation and these challenges will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

### **1.9.2 Policy Context**

Higher education in Zimbabwe is regulated through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD). The Ministry is championing the shibboleth ‘heritage-based education’ through which learning, research and innovations as well as student development programmes are expected to be informed by local heritage and knowledges. Student development in most institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe is treated as an after-thought and is not timetabled. In concurring with this view Madambi and Mangena (2016) expound that student affairs is treated as ancillary and not part of core business of the university. This scenario affects student development negatively in resource allocation because it would not be prioritised in budgetary allocation. Further, there are no written ministerial policies guiding student leadership development in Zimbabwean higher education. At institutional level there are some universities that have policies that relate to SD outlining what type of graduate the university aspires to produce but it seems these policies are rarely implemented. Student affairs practitioners in Zimbabwean universities, particularly Deans of Students need to guide policy formulation concerning leadership, civic, moral and identity development.

### **1.10 Impact of neo-liberalism and globalisation on SD in sub-Saharan African universities**

Speckmann and Mandew (2015) posit that globalisation and neo-liberalism have forced some universities in East and Southern Africa to be corporatist in nature. This has created a scenario where students are constructed as clients who invest in their future by consuming products of higher education. In line with this perspective SD has been forced to align its focus to cater for market needs with the likely result of neglecting its contract with students and society. This has forced SD practitioners to focus more on developing graduate attributes relevant to the neo-liberal framework of imparting competencies such as information literacy, employability, problem-solving and communication which are calibrated to solve global interests of neo-liberal capitalism at the expense of national interests (Speckman & Mandew, 2015). Due to globalisation, SD has been forced to abandon its mission of civic education and obligation to community service and it has also shifted its scope to embrace more corporate partners so as to secure funding. Schreiber (2012) citing Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) note that:

Along with higher education, SDS has shifted its scope to include servicing the revenue-promising partnerships of higher education (Dalton, 1999). Shifts in SDS are evident in its increased focus on revenue-producing partnerships (for instance with bursary providers, sponsors, or ‘wealthy’ academic departments), its selective attention to students who can pay for the services. Various SDS services are thus specially designed for and delivered to selected students. While this is commendable, it also clashes with ethical principles of SDS, which imply that all students are entitled to support and services (Schreiber, 2012, p. 40).

This shows that SD has been hijacked by agents of neo-liberalism and is no longer committed to its goal of producing ethical institutional and community leaders.”

The impact of globalisation and neo-liberalism on SD has been detrimental since indigenous epistemologies and cultural values continue to be disregarded in the designing and implementation of student development programmes. SD practitioners in sub-Saharan African countries have been forced to adopt and adapt to their environments models that were designed and developed in Europe and America to serve global interests of capitalism.

In the Zimbabwean context the researcher has seen that reference to indigenous policies like upholding *hunhu/ubuntu* is only made during orientation address to new students by Vice Chancellors and Deans of Students. Soon after orientation every one forgets about the need to entrench such values in all out of class activities. The International Association of Student

Affairs and Services (IASAS), although dominated by European and American participants has even acknowledged the tension between western and developing countries' models of SD to the extent that it has cautioned against rushing to adopt Western forms of SD without regard to their cultural appropriateness in the developing countries (Schreiber, 2012). It is thus clear that student development should be rooted in indigenous peoples' epistemologies, values and norms and should be designed to serve national needs while reflecting their identities. In this regard, Tuhiwai-Smith's (1999) treatise on decolonising research methodologies warns that the master's tools have never been designed to destroy the master's house, implying that western values and epistemologies cannot be relied upon to develop authentic African student leaders. There is as a consequence need for a major paradigm shift in the design of out of classroom activities. It is for this reason and in this context that decoloniality becomes the most appropriate tool to destroy the spaces of mental and ontological colonisation to achieve authentic humanity and student leadership development that is appropriate for indigenous Zimbabwean students.

Basing on the above observations, the researcher was prompted to contribute to the ongoing academic discourse pertaining to mainstreaming indigenous African epistemologies and policies into higher education through an in-depth study of three state universities in Zimbabwe which for ethical reasons were named A, B and C. Mainstreaming African indigenous epistemologies and policies implies giving space to otherwise silenced decolonial knowledges and values. This would empower students to challenge forms of coloniality in their curricular and campus cultures. This research also aims at developing a student leadership theory anchored on indigenous African philosophy underpinned by *hunhu /ubuntu* values. Selflessness and integrity in leadership is the missing key in unlocking the full leadership potential in students. In spite of the existence of several programmes to instil leadership skills into students in Zimbabwean higher and tertiary education institutions, there is still a huge leadership deficit that needs to be filled. The major problem as highlighted above is that both the academic and the co-curriculum in higher education have remained rooted in western epistemologies and values.

The researcher aims to stimulate the development of a leadership frame embedding *hunhu/ubuntu* core values such as integrity, respect, kindness, courtesy, empathy and decency. The works of Samkange and Samkange cited in Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) and Mapara (2009) show that *hunhu/ubuntu* reveals something about a person's behaviour and moral aptitude and a person with *hunhu/ubuntu* behaves in a decent, rational and

responsible way. Through this study the researcher hopes to proffer for a *hunhu/ubuntu* SD frame that provides a practical template for creating a student leader who has integrity and is morally upright.

### **1.11 Theoretical Considerations**

This study is based on the premise that despite attempts at Africanising higher education curriculum by postcolonial African countries the hegemonic influence of Eurocentrism has remained entrenched. Eurocentrism views the world from a Euro-American lens that advantages Western epistemologies and values while demeaning African ones. It is on the basis of this consideration that this study adopts decoloniality as an appropriate tool to reverse this sad scenario.

Decolonial theory has its roots from Latin American scholars who among others include Dussel (2003), Quijano (2007), Grosfoguel (2013), Mignolo (1999, 2007, 2009, 2013) and Maldonado-Torres (2016, 2017, 2019). It has been popularised in Africa by scholars who, *inter-alia*, include Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020), Mungwini (2016, 2017), Mbembe (2016); Odora-Hoppers (2007, 2009), and Ngugi (1986, 1992, 1997) who propagate for the disentanglement of Africa from Western coloniality of power, knowledge and being. This theme will be developed in detail in chapter 3 that discusses the theoretical framework informing this study. While decoloniality focuses at liberating Africa from Western epistemological and ontological hegemony, it does not translate to a total rejection of Western ways of knowing but it rests on claiming space for indigenous epistemologies to be treated on equal basis with Eurocentrism. Therefore, this study was guided by a decoloniality framework that also anchored the methodological analysis of its findings.

#### **1.11.1 Decoloniality**

The theory underpinning this study draws insights from the scholarly works of Ngugi (1986), Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), Quijano (2007), Mignolo (2013), Grosfoguel (2013) Maldonado-Torres (2019), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) and several other scholars who have theorised on the concept of decoloniality. Further, the works of Odora-Hoppers (2007), Nabudere (2007) and Mungwini (2017) who have problematized on the concepts of cognitive justice and epistemic injustice in knowledge production and legitimation have also enlightened the frame of this study. Decoloniality aims to de-westernise knowledge production and re-position the

epistemologies of Africa and other countries of the Global South as the epicentres of knowledge generation in higher education.

The decolonisation agenda of the twenty-first century centres on the destruction and deconstruction of the cognitive empire, which is the colonisation of the mind by the West which has resulted in the killing of among others, the Africans' identities, cultures and knowledges. This calls for the bringing back of indigenous knowledges and cultures into both the academic and co-curricular activities in universities. This view is further advanced by Magubane, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), who proposes that the university in Sub-Saharan Africa originally emerged as a colonial project and disciplines were constituted as forms of colonial knowledge. The author further expounds that a transplanted university came with the race poison since most textbooks portrayed Africans as barbarians. Colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism have dismembered indigenous peoples because their philosophies and knowledges were declared unfit, evil, primitive and irrelevant for curriculum development (Ngugi, 1997). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, 2018, 2020) argues that coloniality in Africa is a reality because the domains of mind and language have remained colonised. He further posits that coloniality is maintained in books, cultural patterns, self-image, in common sense and aspirations of the youth. This perspective clearly describes the position of SD programmes in higher education in Zimbabwe, where programmes funded by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are like a culture bomb whose impact is annihilating peoples' belief in their cultures, knowledges and languages. This has resulted in loss of identity amongst students. Therefore, the call to decolonise the university should extend beyond the academic curriculum to include SD.

In this regard, decoloniality should be viewed as a transformative tool to reform African higher education to portray African personality and philosophical thinking in order to prevent the alienation of the person from his/her society, language and culture. The universities in Zimbabwe and other sub-Saharan countries are mostly populated by native black people hence their cultures, languages and values should be given equal status in the curriculum. In the same perspective exemplary contribution by scholars such as Mapara and Mudzanire (2013) amplify calls for the renaissance of indigenous knowledge as a heritage to redress cognitive and epistemic injustices which African education has suffered for long. These scholars are pushing for higher education to recognise the need for equality of epistemologies and the need to consider all human beings as equal and thus stem the production of students with fragmented identities. The African university cannot for that reason continue to be used as a centre of

Western cultural hegemony that produces elitists but should be culturally close to the people in order to produce students with an African consciousness.

Current SD models that inculcate Western values in students are detrimental to them because they alienate the students from their communities to the extent that they are culturally neither Africans nor Europeans. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) observes this as the phenomenal problem that Africa faced at the time of independence from colonialism because the political elites who led the independence process breathed coloniality and were its missionaries. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) quoting Fanon notes that such leaders had black bodies with white minds as Europe had colonised their mental universe. This study was undertaken with a view of enhancing the call for a moral, cognitive and epistemic deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge in the domain of student involvement.

In the purview of Mungwini (2017) and Nabudere (2007) African scholars must pursue knowledge production that can renovate African culture and defend the African peoples' dignity. Decoloniality is the most ideal vehicle to drive into the desired future that is free from racism, epistemicides, identicides and culturecides (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). It is within this theoretical frame that this study is being undertaken with the aim of intensifying calls to decolonise higher education with special focus on mainstreaming indigenous African epistemologies in SD. This study dovetails well into the decoloniality movement regionally and globally. At the global level leading scholars in the struggle against coloniality, neo-colonialism and globalisation such as Wallerstein (2004), Mignolo (2013), Grosfoguel (2013), Maldonado-Torres (2019) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) to mention just a few, articulate decolonisation as a challenge against the Eurocentricity of 'being' in order to restore the and ontological being of the colonised people. At a continental level the African Union (AU) advocates for an African political renaissance that leads to African solutions to African problems as way of challenging global coloniality of power on African economies. African scholars who support the African Union initiative argue that decoloniality is the fitting methodology to free Africans from European hegemony in knowledge production and reproduction. They argue that the consumption of education modelled on Western templates has maintained the mental colonisation of Africans well after gaining political independence.

The university is an epistemic site of contestation that needs to be decolonised due to its lack of non-Eurocentric ways of knowing and comprehension that guide the production of knowledge (Mbembe, 2016; Magoqwana, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Epistemic freedom



will bring to finality the unfinished business of decolonisation by granting Africans the right to think and theorise on equal footing with the West thereby and hopefully creating a new humanity where there is co-existence of knowledges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

From the Zimbabwean academic terrain, calls to include indigenous knowledges into the curriculum are growing louder (Mapara, 2017). The MHTEISTD of late has also added its voice on the discourse by advocating for embracing cultural heritage for higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this research is not an isolated academic endeavour but one which is intended to contribute to the decoloniality narrative and debate by extending the discourse to include SD and also contribute to knowledge building by developing a student leadership frame that is anchored on *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy.

As explained earlier, the contemporary university in Africa has faced criticism of having been birthed out of a neo-liberal tradition that suppressed indigenous epistemologies in the academy as well as in the co and extra-curricular activities. Literature on decolonising the university so far has not included research focussing on whether decolonial strategies have been adopted by Student Affairs practitioners and how this inclusion or exclusion is impacting on graduates' affective attributes. Decolonising the African university implies challenging Eurocentric epistemologies with the aim of creating an ecological co-existence between African and Eurocentric ways of knowing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). From this ecological integration of epistemologies there emerges a new transformative frame and praxis in curricular and co-curricular student leadership development programmes.

### **1.12 Operational Definition of Key Terms**

There are numerous and varied conceptualisations of the various terms that have been used in this study. However, the definitions provided here are deemed to be best in reflecting the meaning of these terms as used in this study.

**Afrocentric** - programmes or views that promote African values, philosophy and identity in student development.

**Cognitive injustice** - refers to the refusal to recognise the diverse ways through which different people make sense of the world and their lives.

**Co-curricular involvement** - a form of student learning that occurs outside of the lecture room. In this study the term co-curricular or student involvement will be used to reflect a co-

operative rather than a supplementary form of learning. Co-curricular in this research will include organised activities such as clubs, societies and other student organisations that students participate in (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999; Dugan, 2006).

**Culturecides** - This refers to the decimation or the killing of other people's cultures.

**Eurocentric** - programmes or views that promote Western values, philosophy and ethics in student development.

**Elitist** - programmes or views that promote Western oriented values of the upper classes in society.

**Epistemicides** - the killing of people's ways of knowing and knowledges.

**Epistemic freedom** - appreciation of diverse ways of knowing through which people provide meaning to their lives and make sense of the world.

**Higher education** - in this study this term will be used to refer to universities excluding teachers' colleges and polytechnic colleges.

**Student development** - the ways that students mature, progress and increase their leadership developmental capabilities as a result of enrolling at an institution of higher learning. In this study it is also used to refer to the philosophy that guides student affairs practice and serve as the rationale for providing specific programmes and services for the development of a whole person (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn, 2010).

**Student development theory** - the frame for identifying and addressing students' needs designing programmes and developing policies that help in creating healthy college environments that stimulate positive growth in students.

**Identicide** - destruction of a people's identity through cultural, epistemological and ontological attrition.

**Subaltern** - refers to indigenous people whose epistemologies have been silenced and 'othered' by Eurocentric and colonial epistemologies.

**The West** - this study conceptualises the West in the purview of (Nandy, 2010, p. 11) whose concept of the West develops from a:

...geographical to a psychological entity that visualises the West everywhere within the West and outside it, in structures and in the minds of the people.

From this perspective, the West can be seen to consider countries whose thought processes and practices are similar to those of Europe, for example Canada, Australia, New Zealand and to some extent Hong Kong (now part of China), Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.

The researcher concurs with Nandy's (2010) conceptualisation of the West being everywhere i.e., within the West as geographical entity and outside in the structures and minds of the people as a conceptual one.

### **1.13 Overview of Research Methodology**

This research was envisioned to explore student development which is complex phenomenon that elicit rich and textured explanations, therefore qualitative research approaches were deemed ideal for the study. Qualitative research methods allow for inductive and naturalistic interpretations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In an effort to amplify these methods grounded theory was considered the ideal methodology to gather, analyse and interpret data because of its ability to unpack how complex phenomena occur (Lewis, 2015). The choice of grounded theory among a plethora of other methods was not arbitrarily done, but was carefully arrived at after satisfying the researcher that it fits well with the critical enquiry paradigm theoretical scope of this study. Charmaz (2017) contends that grounded theory assumes the researcher to be connected to the phenomena being studied. In this vein the researcher is a student affairs practitioner at one of the state universities in Zimbabwe, hence grounded theory was quite ideal to this study since the researcher would utilise personal proximity as an opportunity to shed more light on the area under investigation. The researcher also used his memory and experiences as a student at the University of Zimbabwe in the late 1980's and early 1990's, as a high school teacher, Director for Off Campus Life and Student Development and as Dean of Students to enhance grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2009).

Document analysis was applied to develop a detailed comprehension of the policies on student development from the institutions that were selected for this research. In-depth interview and focus group discussions were used to collect data from a small sample of key informants in their context and studied in depth as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007).

Deans of Students, Directors of Campus and Off Campus and Student Development, Counsellors and Wardens were interviewed and focus group interviews were used for the

Student Representative Council (SRC) leaders. Details of the research design and methodology will be discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

#### **1.14 Organisational Structure of the Thesis**

The chapters of this thesis are organised into eight chapters which are broken down as follows:

##### **Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study**

This chapter introduces the study focus, the research questions, aims and objectives, context of the study, synopsis of the literature review, theoretical framework and methodology. The concept decoloniality is presented as providing the basis for the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies in university SD programming. The background to the origins and the genealogy of SD, its scope, purpose and function in higher education and society and the need to embed non- Western epistemologies and policies are discussed.

##### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Focus of this chapter is on the reviewed literature which provided insights into relevant theories and models of SD which can all be traced to Western theorists. The researcher argues that this Eurocentric genealogy of SD has created ideological impressions that have resulted in the perpetuation of Eurocentric epistemologies while subaltern knowledges have been marginalised. The literature review indicates that leadership and identity development are they key functions of student development, hence the thrust of this literature review will lean more on these key concepts. The literature review revealed that student development epistemology has its roots in the Eurocentric tradition that marginalises indigenous epistemologies, cultures and languages of peoples from the Global South. The literature review also identified gaps in student development research in that there is paucity of studies that theorise on student development from the perspective of African indigenous epistemologies let alone on decolonisation of student development theory. An evaluation of these theories reveals the absence of non-Eurocentric epistemologies which are inferiorised and silenced. The chapter highlights indigenous Africa leadership models that can be utilised alongside Western ones in order produce holistic graduates who are relevant to their communities and in the global village. The chapter concludes by recommending for the adoption of *hunhu/ubuntu* values as the guiding philosophy for mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing in SD programming.

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter set in motion the discussion of the main tenets of decolonial theory which paved the way for the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD. The chapter also evaluates the impact of colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalisation on higher education in general and SD in particular. The chapter also discusses the perpetuation of Eurocentric epistemologies in higher education at the expense of indigenous knowledges and its impact on SD. The researcher also highlights the anti-colonial intellectual genealogy in Africa and globally leading to the development of current tenets of decoloniality as a theory. In a nutshell critiques of SD that have emerged in literature such as feminist and cultural critiques are discussed followed by the decolonial critique. In this chapter the researcher argues that basing on the synthesis of the tenets of SD from a decolonial standpoint decolonial measures can be used to analyse the extent to which efforts to mainstream African indigenous epistemologies and policies have been applied. As in the academic arena, epistemic contestation in the university should extent to include SD, which is the platform where the country's political, business and civic leadership is trained.

### **Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Methods**

The focus in this chapter is on the research methodology that would address the research questions. The researcher employed the qualitative research methodology which was guided by the critical enquiry philosophical paradigm. Further, grounded theory was employed as the research strategy in which in-depth interviews with student development practitioners, focus group discussions with the SRC and document analysis were used. After laying out the research methodology, strategy and techniques of data collection the chapter provided details on procedures of data analysis and measures that were taken to ensure validity and reliability of the study.

### **Chapter 5: Research Findings**

This chapter provides the presentation and discussion of the research findings. A recast of research questions was made to guide the analysis of research findings based on analysis of the data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. The chapter addresses research questions by first outlining what the research findings illustrate about the SAPs' and student leaders' attitudes towards mainstreaming indigenous knowledge in SD.

The researcher then provides a breakdown of the extent to which each of the measures to incorporate African indigenous epistemologies was addressed using the data derived from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis.

### **Chapter 6: Research Challenges Faced by SAPs in Student Development**

This chapter discusses the challenges faced by SAPs that act as barriers in embedding indigenous knowledges into student development as revealed from in-depth interviews, FGDs and document analysis.

### **Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings**

This chapter explains implications of the research findings and how the findings will augment the design of a student leadership model imbued by *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy. The chapter presents a discussion on how the findings can enhance the readers' theoretical understanding of decolonising SD through incorporation of indigenous epistemologies and policies. In fulfilment of Education 5.0 and National Development Strategy 1 the researcher presents the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model of SD which demonstrates how the incorporation of indigenous ways of knowing may generate an epistemological paradigm shift in how SD is comprehended and practiced in higher education.

### **Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations**

The chapter presents the summary of the study and recaps the study aims and key findings as well as recommendations. Recommendations include the adoption of the Social Enculturation Model/The Three-Legged Pot model which imbues *hunhu/ubuntu* values into student development theory and pedagogical practice.

#### **1.15 Chapter Summary**

A brief overview of SD in higher education has been presented. This chapter presented the focus of the research, research questions and objectives, an overview of reviewed related literature and the research contribution to knowledge and theory building in SD in higher education.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This study involved an exploration of mainstreaming indigenous African epistemologies and policies in student development within the context of sub-Saharan African higher education with Zimbabwe as a case study. This chapter presents the review of literature on student leadership and civic development and its relationship to implanting indigenous African ways of knowing. The literature review analyses the theories and models of student development used in Zimbabwean higher education. The indigenous African concept of leadership and civic development was examined within the context of *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy which anchors humanity and human relationships in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. Challenges faced by student development practitioners in embedding indigenous epistemologies and policies into student leadership development are deliberated. Further, emerging themes for student development within a neo-liberal political and socio-economic environment will be discoursed. The chapter concludes by an assessment of the implications of these emerging trends on student development and is followed by another chapter reviewing literature which focuses on decolonial theory.

#### 2.2 The Scope of Student Leadership and Civic Development

Student leaders development has recently gained currency in student affairs practice and the academic study of student leadership has also become more pronounced in colleges and universities (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999; Astin, 2005; Soria *et al.*, 2013; Kerr & Luescher, 2017) . But what is student leadership? In answering this question, Soria *et al.*, (2013) point out that student leadership is not necessarily tied to holding a position but can be viewed as the willingness to provide service to others, to contribute to the development of a rich group learning experience. Other definitions of student leadership development include the zeal to be involved in providing services which are beneficial to the university community (Dugan, 2006; Kgosithebe & Luescher, 2015). This thesis focused mainly on co-curricular programmes which are designed to help students develop leadership and civic skills.

Students participate in a wide range of activities that can contribute to the development of leadership outcomes, for examples in the Zimbabwean context they can participate in clubs

and societies, work on and off campus as wardens, sub-wardens, hall committee members, peer educators and partaking in sporting activities.

By participating in all these activities, students develop various leadership competencies such as planning and organising, supervision, problem-solving, teamwork, networking and communication skills (Kuh *et al.*, 2006; Soria *et al.*, 2013). Participating in these programmes also leads to gaining critical leadership outcomes such as ethical conduct, development of personal values and a focus on integrity, willingness to be accountable and taking responsibility and development of a focus on community welfare (Kuh *et al.*, 2008; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2012; Tinto, 2017). Many leadership outcomes involve interactions with others and this helps in the development of team-building skills and acquisition of collaborative leadership skills (Posner, 2004).

Though it is evident that participating in student development programmes on and off campus helps student develop and acquire leadership skills, it is pertinent for student affairs practitioners to ensure that indigenous ways of knowing and cultural values are imbued in the programmes designed to achieve this noble goal of higher education. The following section presents a critique of student leadership development theories and models.

### **2.3 Theories of Student Development**

Student development theory forms the foundation which helps practitioners to understand, support and serve students (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn, 2010). It provides the foundation upon which the comprehension and explanation of concepts of phenomena relating to knowledge and for creating coherent methods of enquiry (Schreiber, 2012). Critical enquiry theorists argue that knowledge is socially constructed and is intricately part and parcel of the complex web of realities (Bernstein, 2000, Creswell, 2012). In exploring the socially constructed reality that obtains in the college learning environment Bernstein (2000) and Kuh *et al.* (2006) identified two domains that have a bearing to student development namely, the official recontextualising and the pedagogical domains. Bernstein, (2000) defines the official recontextualising domain as the non-academic or the administration domain of the university which plays a central role in shaping the campus climate and ethos. The author also describes the pedagogical recontextualising field as the realm where the student interfaces with knowledge construction and reconstruction through the teaching and learning process.



In addition to these two domains, Schreiber (2014) classifies social experience as the third realm that contributes to holistic student development. Student development theory is informed by these realms and American models lay emphasis on integrating it into faculty while in West European models it is positioned within administration area (Magolda & Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2012). This background provides the basis for comprehending student development theory.

Student development theories grapple with issues that relate to the interpersonal and intrapersonal changes that take place during the period when the student is at college (Tinto, 2017). It is on the basis of these developmental changes that student development theory provides the basis for designing programmes and policies that encourage positive growth in students. Student development theory falls within two broad categories namely developmental and environmental impact theories (Evans, Forney Guido, Patton, & Kenn, 2010). They also argue that SD theory enables student affairs practitioners to address students' needs since it focuses on intellectual growth as well as their behavioural and affective changes. Developmental theories centre on human growth i.e. cognitive, moral, emotional, social and identity development among young adults which is the stage reached by most under-graduate students while the environmental impact theories address the relationship between the student and the campus environment (Long, 2012b; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2012). Student development is intended to endow the individual student with personal identity and self and group leadership skills. The conceptual frame that underpins this study focussed on cognitive psychology that draws insights from the works of Piaget (1962), Perry (1978) and Vygotsky (1978) and the environmental impact theories based on the foundational works of Pascarella and Terenzini (2012), Tinto (2005) and Astin (2005).

Cognitive psychology was pioneered by Piaget (1962) who defined intellectual development as an adaptive process which occurs through engagement with the world (Long, 2012a). The main principle of cognitive theory rests on the assumption that development is not a passive process but requires active engagement and involvement with the world. In relation to leadership development cognitive theory shows that students develop leadership skills through active engagement with others.

Such interaction results in identity development in young adults. Another important cognitive theory that informs student development is the social development theory that was developed by Vygotsky (Schreiber, 2012). This theory states that the social and cultural context influence cognitive development hence there is an intricate relationship between the student and her/his historical, social and cultural environment. This theory is very important to student leadership development as it clearly illustrates that cultural and historical background of the student should be taken into consideration when designing leadership programmes. Vygotsky (1978) argues that knowledge construction is culture-based and the student's socio-cultural context plays a significant role in active participation and collaborative learning.

Building on the seminal work of Piaget (1932), Perry (1978) expanded on cognitive psychology and claimed that intellectual development is ego-strengthening (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2012). He developed nine stages through which people go through to maturation and university students are categorised in stages 7-9 which in his scheme of things is the stage where they test new realities and their relativity leading to a firm commitment to the formation of identity and a commitment to ideas and values. Like the other cognitive psychology theories, Perry's (1978) theory lays strong emphasis on individualism as a basic tenet of human development. The significance of cognitive psychology hinges on the fact that it illuminates the way people think and make decisions. For student leadership development, cognitive psychology impacts on student intellectual and ethical developments which affect decision-making by students.

The second category of developmental theory of student development concepts comprises of moral development theories whose major proponents are Kohlberg (1984) and Chickering (1969). Moral development theory deals with the acquisition of ethical decision-making and moral judgement in students. Schreiber propounds that moral and ethical reasoning in university students is attributed to the civic education that students get through participating in student clubs and societies. The moral character of the student has always been a major focus of university education in the West and by extension to sub-Saharan Africa as a result of colonialism since the first modern universities in the region were built by European colonialists (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn, 2010; Schreiber, 2012). Kohlberg (1984) one of the leading proponents of moral development theory explicates that morality progresses through a process of progressive stages and is a product of the student's cognitive processes and engagement with the environment's ethical challenges (Long, 2012b).

Expanding on this perspective, Pascarella and Terenzini (2012) note that moral development in the individual develops from individual focus to the social and ultimately to the universality of morality. The major weakness of Kohlberg's theory is that it has cultural limitations emanating from the fact that it is based on European cultural and epistemological background and what he regards as universal cultural ethics are European cultural and discursive ethics. Further, the theory lays huge emphasis on individualism with no regard to group moral development which makes it culturally ambivalent to the Southern African cultural environment which puts little emphasis on the individual and more to the individual.

The third category of developmental theories of student development consists of the psycho-social theories which deal with psycho-social development and these theorists argue that personal development is resultant from the individual's interaction with the social environment (Magolda and Astin, 1993; Astin, 2005; Long, 2012b). According to Tinto (2017) the major proponents of this theory are Erikson and Chickering who indicate that college students' social relationships play a key role in psycho-social growth. Erikson argues that development occurs in a social environment and is nurtured in social relationships (Astin, 2005; Long, 2012b). For leadership development to occur, students must be engaged in their campus environment through participating in curricular and co-curricular activities and by interacting with peers and staff. Central to this theory is identity development of college students. In addition, separation from family is key in learning to make decisions based on the student's own thinking and reasoning. Pascarella (2005) points out that being accepted by peers is very important at this stage and students create a sense of identity and solidarity through playing with peers.

Chickering is the main proponent of the psycho-social development theory, and he proposed the seven vector model to illustrate student consciousness towards individualisation and her/his commitment to an exclusive set of values and ideals (Astin, 2005; Long, 2012b). The seven vector model as presented by Chickering (1969) consists of the following constructs (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn, 2010; Long, 2012b):

- i) Achieving competence i.e. higher education develops increased competence in students.
- ii) Managing emotions- implying that students begin to manage their emotional lives by developing impulse control and suitable response to emotional excitement.
- iii) Moving through autonomy towards independence- students grow emotional independence from depending on others' approval.

- iv) Developing mature interpersonal relationships- students begin to develop to a sense of self thereby enhancing their capacity for healthy relationship and commitment grounded on interdependence through social, intimate relationship and learning experiences.
- v) Establishing identity- This is the central vector that links previous and subsequent development. The student develops intricate identity that enhances her/his capability to deal with aspects of gender, ethnic, cultural and family stresses.
- vi) Developing purpose- the student starts to develop a sense of intentionality and direction through planning and being future focussed.
- vii) Developing integrity- the student commences developing coherent values and belief that portray socially acceptable conduct.

The major criticism that Chickering's (1969) model faced is that it promotes individualism and self-centredness which is at cross purpose with the indigenous Southern, Eastern and Central African children's cultural backgrounds in which one's humanity is dependent upon another's. This attests to the need for cultural and epistemological accommodation between Afrocentric and Eurocentric ways of knowing in student leadership development.

The third category of student development theories commonly used in higher education comprises of the environment impact theories whose focus is the impact of the college on the student (Long, 2012b). The major proponents of this theory are Astin and Astin (2005); Kuh (2006) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2012). The theories explore the interface between the student and the campus environment at the individual, peer groups and at institutional level focussing on the interplay of the social class and the educational experience (Schreiber, 2014). The locus of student development is situated on the relationship between the student and her/his peers and also within the academic and social contexts of the university campuses. Most university campus cultures are alienating and intimidating to students from rural backgrounds due to the dominance of Eurocentrism leading to such students' failure to adjust resulting in them trying to copy the Western culture. In support of this argument Magoqwana (2018) exposit most students from African rural backgrounds are outsiders to the higher education environment owing to the cultures, institutional systems and structures they find upon entry into the university which estranges them.

Astin (2005) proposes the trending input-environment-outcomes model which shows that the student's interaction with the university environment has an influence on her/his behaviour.

Astin (2005) identified the academic and family background as the inputs that the student brings to her/his higher education experiences. Astin (2005) further posits that the university environment consists of the peer groups, staff, policies, campus cultures, and the curricular programmes which the student meets at the university. The interplay between the student and the university environment results in the outcomes, i.e. the competencies, attributes, values and aspirations which the student displays after graduating from the university. An analysis of Astin's (2005) theory indicates that students learn and develop leadership skills and attributes through participating in curricular and co-curricular activities and the main role of the universities to provide opportunities that stimulate student involvement.

Tinto (2017) developed the student integration model of student retention whose major highlight is that student leadership development is the result of the interface between the university context and the student. According to Tinto (2017), several key factors are responsible for student attrition and retention, which *inter-alia* a feeling of isolation, failure to adjust to the new environment and an inability to incorporate new information and knowledge with previous knowledge. Therefore, students' social integration within the college is a critical component of their acquisition of leadership skills. In the same vein, Pascarella (2005) postulates that student development is the function of the interplay between the student's background, institutional characteristics and the university environment where these three constructs influence the quality of the interaction with faculty, staff and other students as agents of socialisation.

Following Tinto's (2017) model, Kuh *et al.* (2008) argue that student's academic and social engagement is a determining factor on personal development. The authors further posit that while on campus the students should feel cared for, valued and that the institution should treat them as full members of the campus community. This can be achieved through various platforms on campus which include the lecture room, sports fields, in residences and student clubs. The main tenet of Kuh *et al.*'s (2008) theory is that peer to peer interaction in and out of the lecture room has a significant impact on student development.

While the underpinning theories of student development are varied, common to all are attempts to strengthen student leadership skills acquisition. However, as noted by Madambi and Mangena (2016) what is missing in Zimbabwean higher education is the a clear philosophical framework that imbues indigenous African cultural and epistemological background of the student.

Hopefully the exploration of this study will make a key national contribution to the development of a meta-normative framework to guide student development and student affairs management in general in Zimbabwean higher education institutions. The theories that dominate student development in sub-Saharan African higher education institutions including Zimbabwe influence assumptions about students, which in turn inform practice. These theories are largely ambivalent to indigenous African thought processes about leadership because of their rootedness in Eurocentrism. The next section looks at the indigenous African concept of leadership.

### **2.3 Student leadership development models**

The core function of student affairs in a university is to develop future leaders (Abdul-Hamid; Krauss & Ismail, 2008; Astin, 2005; Soria *et al.*, 2013; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). The management of co-curricular aimed at developing leadership skills among university students has now become a top priority of universities globally (Komives *et al.*, 2006; Posner, 2004; Soria *et al.*, 2013). It is pertinent to note that while academic and co-curricular programmes are increasingly focussing on leadership awareness, character formation and skills acquisition, the missing link in the process is the nature and origin of the knowledge and values that inform these programmes. Abdul-Hamid *et.al.*, (2008) posit that student leadership development models are categorised into two groups namely, traditional and post-industrial student leadership development models. Traditional models were developed in the early stages of higher education and their focus was mainly on training character and the role of the individual as a leader. The key attributes of this model were to promote a command and control style of leadership with the individual being vested with a lot of authority and strong managerial influence. In relation to this study this model of leadership would be found to be at cross-purposes with the values of indigenous sub-Saharan inhabitants like *hunhu/ubuntu* values which encourage a communitarian style of leadership. It is also pertinent to note that when colonialists established universities and colleges in sub-Saharan African countries during the colonial era, they imported both the academic and co-curricular disciplines of the (former) colonising power to these universities.

Indigenous African epistemologies and policies were ‘othered’ and treated as inferior and were not considered fit for inclusion in the curriculum (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014).

The post-industrial era brought forth a different paradigm of student leadership development, and its focus was on human relations and shared goals (Abdul-Hamid,*et al.*, 2008; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Posner, 2004). The post-industrial models are described as being transformational and valued- centred. However, the questions which are still being asked by scholars from the Global South such as Mavhunga (2007); Ngugi (1986, 2009) Madambi and Mangena (2016); Magoqwana (2018) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, 2018 and 2020) are centring on whose values, epistemologies and policies informed the development of these post-industrial models. Answers to these questions indicate that epistemologies and cultural values of the indigenous peoples of the Global South have remained ‘othered’ and were not considered in the design of student development models used in most universities in sub-Saharan Africa as will be discussed in the next section.

#### **2.4 Key conceptualisations of leadership**

The fundamental conceptualisations of student leadership development were borrowed from theories and models developed for industry with supervisors and managers being the focal persons. Early conceptualisations of leadership included the great man, behavioural, trait and situational approaches (Kezar, Acuña Avilez, Drivalas & Wheaton, 2017). The great man leadership concept was developed from Charles Darwin’s theory that leaders are born and not trained (Dugan & Komives, 2007). The trait leadership concept stresses that certain traits are characteristic of great leaders and only great leaders are endowed with such characteristics. Komives *et al.* (2006) and Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) argue that the behavioural approach was developed in the 1950s with corporate managers in mind and it stresses on behaviours practiced by successful and unsuccessful managers. They also outline that the situational leadership concept was developed almost at the same time with its emphasis on leadership styles that are practiced in different situations. It is not the researcher’s intention to go into the finer details of each of these approaches to leadership but just to highlight their main tenets for analysis and implications for embedding indigenous epistemologies into student leadership development.

Komives *et al.*, (2006) expound that prominent leadership development theorists, Burns and Rost (1956) modified these approaches and each came up with their own models of leadership namely the transactional and transformation leadership respectively. Burns (1956) tendered the transactional leadership model with its emphasis on individual initiative in leadership development.

Its critics have pointed out that like all other Eurocentric models it lays too much emphasis on the individual and was designed with a factory supervisor as the main focus hence its other name is the industrial approach. In relation to this study it is important to note that this model was imported into Sub-Saharan African institutions of higher learning and it continues to inform student development practice, hence the call for the need to imbue indigenous ways of knowledge production into leadership development. Dugan and Komives (2007) indicate that the second approach that was developed by Rost in the 1970s which is called the transformation or post-industrial model encompasses motivation and morality of the individuals as the constructs that need to be raised to higher levels for transformational leadership to take place (Kezar *et al.*, 2017). This model is widely used for leadership development in higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. Its main facets indicate that good leaders should be able to transform the performance of their followers through motivation and being role models. A critique of these approaches shows that they lay greater emphasis on the individualistic framework of leadership which is alien to the sub-Saharan African context particularly in Southern, Eastern and Central Africa where *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy is the pillar of community survival.

The third group of post-industrial approaches to leadership consists of the reciprocal leadership models and under this umbrella there are the following models, servant leadership, leadership identity model, authentic leadership model, the grounded theory model and main one being the Social Change Model (SCM) (Posner, 2004). The servant leadership model which is popularly used in Zimbabwean student development emphasises on exemplary leadership stressing the need for leaders to put service ahead of benefits. This model calls for the need for leaders to consider themselves as servants of the people and leadership is considered as a vocation for service to the people regardless of the size of the remuneration basket. However, in practice this seems to be just a rallying slogan with no concretisation on the ground. There have been cases of the leadership at political, corporate and religious level being in the press headlines for scandalous looting of national assets and other various forms of corruption (Shizha, 2015). This proves that the use of the servant model of leadership development without grounding it in indigenous values may not achieve the desired outcomes. This is in fact reflected at national level where the political leadership serves its interests and not those of the majority of the masses.



Komives *et al.*, (2006) designed the grounded theory model of student leadership development that was focussed on understanding the process of leadership identity. Leadership identity helps leaders to come to awareness that they can make a difference in their communities by working effectively with others to accomplish change. It is through this process that leaders can create trust among their followers. The leadership identity model also creates a deep sense of self-awareness among the leaders. Student civic engagement in higher education is mainly grounded on this model. The model requires students to identify possible areas of engaging the community as a way of developing civic skills in student leaders.

The Social Change Model (SCM) is one of the post-industrial leadership approaches that is related to this thesis. The model was developed in the USA and it stresses the essence of leadership as being a collective action that involves groups and the community and it goes beyond the individual (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Soria *et al.* 2013; Kezar *et al.*, 2017). The main tenets of this model place great emphasis on the premise that leadership brings about development of self-awareness and service to others through collaborative work to bring about change for the common good. Kezar *et al.*, (2017, pp. 17-18) point out that there are several key elements of this model.

They note that:

- The model is inclusive of all people and that it does not focus on those holding leadership positions. It recognises that leadership development can take place in all students in different spheres of involvement in co-curricular and curricular activities and not only to those who hold official positions.

Because the SCM concept of leadership focuses on the process and not the position that a student holds, it is essential to observe that:

- The model strongly emphasises the values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship and service.

It also points out that:

- Activities that serve the common good help develop leadership capacity in a collaborative environment.

One other important issue to note is that the model can be used can be used for student affairs practitioners, academics, faculty administrators and all those who are involved in student leadership development.

This is largely possible because:

- The model is amenable to use in combination with other models.

Another aspect is that the main goals of the model are also to enhance and develop the capacities of self-knowledge and leadership competence in students to facilitate positive social change at their institution and in the community.

The main shortcoming is that the SCM is a Eurocentric model which was developed with white students in mind. However, its essence lies in its adaptability to different environments through its amenability to be used in conjunction with other models. In relation to this study, the researcher argues that elements of this study can be blended with *hunhu/ubuntu* values so as to have an inter-epistemic model that imbues indigenous ways of knowledge production with Eurocentric values. The mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies into student development does not imply throwing away the Eurocentric models and theories; it thus insinuates the recognition by the West that the global village they preach about is a poly-epistemic world where indigeneity should peacefully co-exist with the West's epistemologies.

A review of literature in this section indicates that co-curricular involvement, holding formal leadership position and participation in student development training and education programmes actively contributes to students' acquisition of leadership development outcomes. The major limitation of this literature review is that it lacks focus on research carried out in sub-Saharan Africa's higher education context on leadership development. The researcher could not locate studies dealing with student leadership development except of some literature on student politics and activism. Although there is some relationship between student politics and student leadership development, the researcher felt that this was not adding some impact on the focus of this thesis.

## **2.5 Summary of Student Leadership Development Models**

A critical view of the theories discussed above reveals that there is absence of indigenous epistemologies and policies on SD in Zimbabwean higher education and an over-abundance of Eurocentrism. This invisibility of indigenous ways of knowing in SD in Zimbabwean higher

education leads to the researcher concurring with what Odora- Hoppers (2009) describes as epistemic and ontological violence on indigenous epistemologies by Eurocentrism. Basing on Zimbabwean higher education scenario one may ask why identity and leadership development would not include *hunhu/ubuntu* values which are the basis of inter and intrapersonal relationships in the society. The theories of student leadership development discussed above privilege the works of white scholars and these theories are positioned hegemonically to influence SD practitioners in the Global South where “*universities validate the theories emanating from the North and consume them voraciously*” (Fúnez-Flores & Phillon, 2017:21). This observation indicates that SD in the global academic structure is inundated with theories and models which were developed by Eurocentrists and these theories “*invisibles the experiences, knowledges and social practices of the people*” living in the Global South (Fúnez-Flores & Phillon, 2017, p. 27). Therefore, the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies is a necessary turn for SD in higher education in countries of the Global South.

The next section looks at challenges faced by student development practitioners in mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies and policies in student development before going to the next chapter that deals with the theoretical frame of decoloniality which guides this inquiry.

## **2.6 Indigenous African Concept of Leadership**

The bulk of the theories of student leadership development which are taught in higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa were developed and contextualised in Europe and the United States of America (Masango, 2002). These theories and models depict traits of Euro-American culture such as aggressiveness and individualism and these are portrayed as the perfect leadership traits and behaviour (Gumede, 2017). The Western aspects of leadership are in sharp contrast to indigenous African concepts of a leader because aggressiveness and individualism are not valued in African societies. Masango (2002) indicates that Eurocentric models of leadership lead to the production of graduates who are considered social misfits in their communities. This is because some graduates exhibit behaviour that is at variance with societal expectations of an educated person.

In traditional African societies a leader was obliged to rule his subjects humanely and with respect to his people. Instead of the being called the ‘chef’ as the present crop of leaders is called, they were regarded as servants of the clan, tribe and community. The coming of colonialism led to the erosion of African concept of leadership in sub-Saharan African societies

because it was regarded as uncultured and was not considered for curriculum and instruction in the education system. Thus, the colonial education produced the likes of Kamuzu Banda in Malawi, Arap Moi in Kenya, Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Idi Amin in Uganda as well as many other tyrannical and corrupt leaders in the African continent. These are examples of sub-Saharan African leaders who became archetypes of brutality against fellow Africans and an archetype of a leadership that had no moral standing among its people. The ideal indigenous leader in most sub-Saharan African states was accountable to the whole community and was supposed to be a person with *hunhu/ubuntu* which he/she displayed through genuine care for the community. In the context of indigenous African leadership the leader was supposed to be a servant of the people a resource person for the community and a co-worker (Masango, 2002). Desmond Tutu cited in Masango (2002, p. 709) opines that “African leadership in community should focus on promoting love, truth, freedom, peace, reconciliation, justice and right relations”. This articulation clearly illustrates the importance of indigenous African concept of leadership in student development in African higher education.

Elucidating on the concept of leadership development in the African context, Koenane (2018) expounds that *khotla* a traditional village assembly played a major role in the training of young men into leadership. On this event all participants, old and young were free to participate in the discussions as equals and the youth learnt an inclusive approach to leadership that acknowledged the contribution of many other actors as well as the contextual and systemic dynamics that fashioned the practice of leadership. This same concept can be applied to student leadership development in Zimbabwean universities where peer groups and other student development clubs and societies can be re-fashioned along the *khotla/dare* concept.

Student leadership development has recently gained currency in sub-Saharan African higher education, however many of the leadership theories and models are largely Eurocentric and African epistemologies are at best ignored and at worst viewed as obstacles to good leadership. In Zimbabwean universities leadership development from an African perspective is absent and this is viewed as the reason for the production of student leaders whose attributes make them social misfits in their communities.

The researcher suggests that Southern African culture of *hunhu/ubuntu* with its emphasis on integrity, love, respect and care for others provides the basis for leadership development in

student affairs management and programming. The next section looks at *hunhu/ubuntu* as a way of implanting indigenous epistemologies in SD in higher education.

## **2.7 Hunhu/Ubuntu leadership development**

Ubuntu is a philosophy of communitarian relations that is mainly drawn from peoples of sub-Saharan Africa but is mostly practised in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Malunga, (2006) contends that *hunhu/ubuntu* development is based on the values of sharing, communal ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges. Values based on *hunhu/ubuntu* can contribute to student development in higher education in sub-Saharan African countries. At the core of *hunhu/ubuntu* is the inter-dependence of humanity on each other because the individual is defined in terms of her/his relationship with others. In the context of *hunhu/ ubuntu* an individual is considered to be human or a person or exists as a human through other people. Citing Mbiti, Etieyibo (2017, p. 318) postulates that *hunhu/ubuntu* is summarised in the aphorism “I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am”. This implies that one’s humanity blossoms because of the humanity of others, therefore beingness that thrives outside the humanity of others is tantamount to being inhuman and disrespectful of the humanity of others.

Student leadership development in the framework of *hunhu/ubuntu* ontology should be understood in the context of the need to produce leaders who are holistic and communitarian in outlook. *Hunhu/ubuntu* ontology calls for the development of a leader whose self-awareness leads him/her to the understanding that there is harmonious relationship of humans and all the things in the cosmos (Etieyibo, 2017). A leader with *hunhu/ubuntu* understands that the essence of human beingness is embedded into the well-being of the community and the surrounding environment. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* inculcates the values of respect, togetherness, and the establishment of harmonious relations with others. A leader with *hunhu/ubuntu* displays a certain character disposition which leads to the cementing of values such as friendliness, hospitality, caring and sharing, generosity, openness to others, sympathy and empathy. A leader with *ubuntu* is one who is deeply embedded to her/his community which she/he cares for and has a disposition to positively contribute to the well- being of others (Gumede, 2017; Malunga, 2006).

In the purview of Etieyibo (2017, p. 320) the hallmark attributes of an indigenous leader with *hunhu/ubuntu* she/he leads the community to move from, “Confrontation to mediation,

estrangement to reconciliation, parasitism to contribution, competition to solidarity and intolerance to civilised dialogue”. These are the attributes that need to be promoted in student development in sub-Saharan higher education as they are constructed on the cultural heritage of indigenous African students who form the majority in most universities. Student affairs practitioners can enhance the acquisition of these values by designing programmes and activities that require students to reflect on various moral situations and experiences they would have encountered.

The inclusion of *hunhu/ubuntu* values into student development in Zimbabwean higher education would help in countering the coloniality of being that is articulated through the use of Eurocentric models and programmes of SD in its universities. Coloniality is a process by which European colonialists have proclaimed themselves as the apotheosis of humanity on one hand, and on the other defined the colonised other as sub-human, illogical and under-developed non-being (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, 2017; 2019). The following chapter discusses coloniality in detail. Chinua Achebe (1973) concisely sums up the need to counter Eurocentric bias against the indigenous Africans in his book *Things Fall Apart* when he says that the aim of writing his book was to promote awareness of the African culture.

Achebe (1973) argues that:

We must begin to correct the prejudices which generations of detractors created about the negro ... that negroes have a lower grade of talent than whites ... It is inconceivable to me that a serious African writer could be indifferent to this argument which calls his humanity into question – It is my business as a writer to teach that there is nothing disgraceful about (being) African. It is my aim as a writer to help my society gain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement (Achebe, 1973, p. 3).

This clarion call by Achebe serves as an awakening call for student development practitioners in Zimbabwean universities to value indigenous African culture and epistemologies in designing SD programmes. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* will provide a solid basis for developing leaders who have attributes of honesty, integrity, hospitality, civility, and a disposition towards the well-being of the community. In the same thread, Ngugi (1997) articulates that post-colonial political, societal and religious leaders have failed to live up to the expectations of the people because they are greedy, dishonesty, deceitful, exploitative, fraudulent and oppressive. In other words, these leaders lack *hunhu/ubuntu* values hence they do not care about the well-being of

their societies and possibly the situation can be remedied by embedding *hunhu/ubuntu* values in leadership development programmes.

## **2.8 Obstacles to mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies into SD in higher education**

Change and innovation are normally resisted by implementers because of the fear of deskilling and increase in workloads. In this regard student affairs practitioners are likely to resist the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies in student development if the changes are likely to require imparting new skills and knowledge to students because it implies that they leave the comfort zone. There are also external factors that militate against embedding indigenous epistemologies in SD such as globalisation and internationalisation of higher education. These challenges are analysed in detail in below.

### **2.8.1 Resistance to change by Student Affairs practitioners**

Innovation implies the need to acquire new skills by student affairs practitioners and they may see the innovation as an inconvenience thus they may pose the largest threat to the attempt to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing into SD. Bringing in new models of out of class programmes requires that the implementers be retrained to empower them to articulate the desired changes confidently. If the new innovation is not in sync with the beliefs of the student affairs practitioners, it breeds vulnerability among them and this often results in the rejection of the innovation. Aldawood (2018) citing Kuhn identifies two stages of change management namely, the normal and the revolutionary phases. Kuhn in Aldawood (2018) illuminates that the normal phase is a period during which beliefs and practices are accepted as the norm and there is deep commitment to the way one comprehends and interprets the world and any innovations which conflict with the norm are stifled. The second phase constitutes the point when there emerges conflicting views to the norm resulting in a breakaway by a new generation which brings out new research and paradigm (Shetty, 2018). Tagg cited in Shetty (2018) opines that people resist change if it is seen to increase their work or to be threatening the status quo. In support of this viewpoint Brownwell and Tunner (2012) in Aldawood (2018) posit that failure of the new ideas to fit into the prevailing psychological and physical factors leads to cognitive bias and rejection of the innovation by the implementers.

Another stumbling block could be the funding that some SD programmes receive from corporates whose character and philosophy is neo-liberal. In applying Kuhn's process to the field of SD it can be argued that the challenges that student affairs practitioners face from neo-

liberalism are quite significant. For instance, there is the state's deliberate under-funding of student development programmes and the risk of one losing his/her job. In Zimbabwe due to reduced state financial backing most universities have cut funding for out of class programmes and any new innovations are likely to fail because of lack of resources. To overcome some of these impediments there is need for increased state funding of higher education in Zimbabwe. Further, the government through the ministry of higher education should provide legislative support by enacting laws that promote the implanting of indigenous knowledges in the universities' curricular and co-curricular programmes. In addition, Zimbabwean student affairs practitioners who show willingness to support the innovation can be supported through incentivising them. This can be done through sponsoring exchange programmes to countries which have taken the decolonial thrust to higher levels such as South Africa. Despite these noble efforts to reduce hurdles to the mainstreaming of indigenous African epistemologies into SD, the onslaught of neo-liberalism and globalisation oiled by capitalist funds continues to pose a real impediment to the success of the project. Entrenched Eurocentrism in student engagement programmes is largely to blame for the continued subalternisation of indigenous knowledges in higher education (Mandew, 2005). Redemption of this scenario lies in the repurposing of SD by way of implanting decolonial programmes through poetry, dance, drama, public speaking, workshops, symposia and conferences with key note speeches delivered by epistemic authorities in indigenous cultures, languages and ways of knowing.

### **2.8.2 Challenges posed by globalisation and standardisation**

Global capitalism with its focus on the production of transnational elites is a new force that is shaping higher education. Mbembe (2016) argues that global elites are investing in a paradigm shift of the university's structure to a new form that is tailored to produce privileged transnational classes who are skilled to use the aspects of globalisation to reproduce and defend their privileged status. The aim of these global elites is to internationalise higher education by removing state control so as to facilitate the smooth mobility and compatibility of skills across national boundaries by promoting linkages between global industry and the universities for the preservation of global capitalism (Castell, 2011; Mbembe, 2016).

This development creates competition amongst universities on terms defined by the West on Euro-American epistemological frames which further alienates indigenous epistemologies from being given space in curriculum development including in SD. A further exploration of the impact of globalisation on higher education reveals that it has resulted in the



commercialisation of every facet of university management to the extent that student affairs practitioners are required to demonstrate in measurable terms that SD contributes to the core business of the university. This has led to student affairs practitioners placing more emphasis on market related programmes in partnership with the corporate world. Schreiber (2012) cites an example of a partnership between a South African university and IBM that was aimed at developing leadership competencies among students where the programme was structured not along SD best practice principles but along marketing principles. This tension between SD and market related requirements of globalisation further marginalise indigenous ways of knowing in SD.

In this section the challenges faced by student affairs practitioners in their efforts to implant indigenous knowledges into SD have been discussed. The review shows the pressure that is exerted on universities in general and SD in particular over the need to develop graduates with global graduate attributes which are transferable and compatible to any context. This approach that focuses on marketisation, globalisation and internationalisation of higher education will further alienate indigenous knowledges in student development.

## **2.9 Structural Organisation and the place of SD in higher Education**

The place of student affairs in the university organisational structure is of great significance because it affects its status, function and effectiveness (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2012). There are two typologies that locate the place of student affairs in the structure of the university, i.e. they are either centralised or decentralised. Schreiber (2014) contends that in the centralised type the Dean of Students reports directly to the university executive and in the decentralised one the Dean of Students reports to an academic department or faculty. The practice in most Zimbabwean state universities is that Student Affairs Departments reports directly to the university Vice-Chancellor. The Department is considered as non-academic and is independent of faculty yet it deals directly with an interfaculty constituency. Student affairs practitioners are also viewed as administrative staff who only provide a service and not as professionals with competencies to address systemic issues with similar goals to those of academics (Schreiber, 2012).

This poses a serious challenge because this system disconnects student academic development from his/her out of lecture learning experiences. Further, this system creates competition between student affairs and faculty for space on the timetable and this would result in students

missing out on co-curricular activities. This creates a situation where mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies is hampered due to lack of time thereby forcing students to concentrate only on academic development at the expense of personal growth. It would be ideal to integrate academic and personal development and create shared outcomes between faculty and student affairs. This is what *hunhu* after all emphasizes on through proverbs such as *Rume rimwe harikombi churu* (One [big] man cannot surround an anthill).

## **2.10 Chapter summary**

In this section, the concept of student leadership was defined with emphasis on the point that leadership does not only entail holding a post. It brought to the fore the idea that student acquire leadership skills by participating in student organisations and other co-curricular activities. Another issue that was also highlighted is that self-leadership is an important aspect of leadership development in that it equips students with the skills to monitor and evaluate themselves on personal management. The section as well underscored that a person should be able to lead him/herself first before trying to lead others. In it models of student leadership development were also analysed and it was revealed that most of the models were developed with a corporate manager in mind. They were they also noted to be Eurocentric in perspective. This gives currency to the focus of this study that is aimed at mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing into student leadership development. This segment also examined challenges that are faced by student affairs practitioners in entrenching indigenous epistemologies into SD. The reviewed literature on SD indicated that globalisation and its neo-liberal influences such as marketisation and internationalisation of higher education have entrenched the grip of Eurocentric epistemologies in SD. This further pushes indigenous knowledges to the periphery impacting negatively on efforts to imbed indigenous knowledges into SD. The structural separation of academic development from SD was also highlighted as a challenge impacting on implanting indigenous ways of knowing into SD and the need for the two to be treated as linked was emphasised.

The next chapter looks into decolonising of SD guided by the theory of decoloniality.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

This study attempts to bring into debate the decolonial discourse which targets knowledge production including ontologies and epistemologies that try to illuminate coloniality of power theories and methodologies into the realm of SD in higher education. When considering decolonising epistemologies the researcher has taken into account Ngugi (1992; Grosfoguel (2013); Mignolo (2013); Santos' (2014) Maldonado-Torres (2017, 2019) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018, 2020,2021) exposition that coloniality colonises the minds and bodies of the subjugated people. They opine that, this is because it forces them to dump their cultural practises in favour of western ones and results in the concretisation of Western ideas in the colonised or former colonised people's minds. Despite the political end of colonialism, colonial domination is still very palpable in the curricular and co-curricular programmes of universities in most sub-Saharan African countries including Zimbabwe (Mamdani, 2016; Ngugi, 1986). It is therefore worth pointing out that the modern university in Africa was and is still is a colonial edifice and its institutional form and the curricular content was an external import.

Unfortunately, the post- independence efforts to transform it have only centred on deracialising its staff while the curriculum has largely remained intact. What Mamdani (2016) and Ngugi (1986) are addressing is that the curriculum including SD programmes in sub-Saharan African universities are driven by practitioners who are convinced that Europe and North America are the only places where theories and models are produced. The situation is further worsened by the fact that most exchange programmes or research visits between African and western universities are based on unequal power relations with the West dictating knowledge legitimation. This is also compounded by the fact that most faculty members are Western trained. This sad scenario results in the production of epistemically blind and ontologically non-existent graduates whose actions perpetuate the alienation and invisibilisation of indigenous epistemologies. It is against this backdrop that this study tries to focus the decolonial discourse on SD in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa with a special focus on Zimbabwe.

Decoloniality offers alternative forms of theorising about knowledge, power and being which aim to promote indigenous ways of knowing and cultures. The university has the potential to become the site on which ‘othered’ epistemologies, cultures and cosmologies may converge and thus promote epistemic dialogue between the Global North and South. The next section focuses on the reasons why it is important to decolonise SD in universities in sub-Saharan Africa before looking at the decolonial theory in detail.

### **3.2 Decolonising the university**

The greater part of the debate to decolonise the university in Zimbabwe has centred mainly on the academic curriculum and there is little regard to the out of class student engagement activities. Those who advocate for the decolonisation of the co-curriculum activities are ridiculed or even persecuted. Ngugi (1992; 1986; 1997) experienced political persecution including being jailed for using theatre arts in the community as a way of teaching literature at the University of Nairobi. Curricular analysts argue that there is a great deal of learning that takes place outside the classroom as the student interacts with his/her peers and staff. It is in fact this part of his/her education that shapes the character and personality of the student. Isubaie (2015) expounds that the hidden curriculum has strong impact on students’ ethical, social, behavioural, intellectual and spiritual values. It is important because it teaches and enforces societal norms, values and belief systems. The scope of this discussion hinges on the argument that the post-colonial university in sub-Saharan Africa has remained stuck on the Eurocentric purpose for which imperial Europe established the university. This function was to ‘civilise’ the world in its image (Mamdani, 2016). What imperial Europe considered as the human-being was only the European and the colonised peoples were regarded as sub-human species. Thus, instead of acknowledging the plurality of experiences and diversity of humanity the universalism emerging out of European enlightenment sought to craft a world civilisation based on European epistemologies, cultures, experiences and history (Mignolo, 2007, 2009, 2011). Spivak cited in Chakravorty and Righting (2001) expounds that under imperial Europe universalism implied subalternisation of other cultures and knowledges, and it is this institutional form of the university that was transferred to the colonies.

As Mamdani (2016, p. 70) succinctly puts it:

Decolonisation of the university will have to engage with this vision of the undifferentiated experience which breathed curricular (and co-curricular) content into the institutional form we know as the modern university.

What Mamdani (2016) implies in this observation is that decolonisation of the university in Africa should not be superficial, but that it should go beyond mere curricular reform to embrace the inclusion of indigenous African epistemologies into both academic and co-curricular programmes. It is worthy citing Mignolo (2009, p. 50) to clarify the importance of the university in the epistemic decolonial struggle; “the university has the potential to be the place where Eurocentrism and other knowledges, ways of knowing and cosmologies may converge”. The university in Zimbabwe, should be an engine for decoloniality by facilitating the cross-pollination of epistemologies and knowledges giving birth to what Santos (2014, p. 32) termed “ecology of knowledges”. In line with this proposition SD practitioners in Zimbabwean universities should blend *hunhu/ubuntu* values with Western ethics to come up with relevant student leadership development models.

The debate about decolonising the university can be traced back to struggles against colonialism, neo-colonialism, and coloniality in their various forms like globalisation, internationalisation and neo-liberalism. Globalisation and internationalisation have continued to ‘other’ epistemologies from the global south and SD is among those worst affected by these phenomena (Speckmann & Mandew, 2015). The decolonisation of the university in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the curriculum, textbooks and the adaptation of indigenous epistemologies to suit the cultural context of the majority of students continues to pose the greatest challenge to postcolonial higher education. Vargas, (2017) points out that decolonising the university should not only dwell on the academic curriculum but should also take into consideration the onto-epistemology of Eurocentrism which claims a universal reality that does not validate indigenous epistemologies. Onto-Epistemology refers to the combination of ontology and epistemology i.e. the practice of knowing in being (Vargas, 2017). Student development in colonial higher education in Zimbabwe resulted in the traumatic imposition of identities through the promotion of Eurocentric consciousness in African students (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). This paradigm of SD programming has surprisingly persisted in postcolonial Zimbabwean higher education through the implementation of SD models designed in the West.

Therefore, the calls for decolonising SD development in Zimbabwean higher education are genuine or else universities will continue to churn out graduates who are not fit for purpose in their communities.

Drawing lessons from the South African higher education context, (Shizha, 2015) notes that the *#FeesMustFall* and *#RhodesMustFall* student activist movements in South Africa were clamouring for the decolonisation of the academy in South Africa. In the *#FeesMustFall* movement students were voicing their anger at the commodification of university education as this disadvantaged the majority of students from poor and historically disadvantaged indigenous students (Vargas, 2017). In the same perspective the *#RhodesMustFall* student activists condemned the colonial iconography and symbols in the universities and the attitudes of the people represented by those symbols towards blacks that continued to shape the South African higher education twenty-four years after independence. Some of the issues raised by South African student decolonial movements can be found in the Zimbabwean universities today particularly in the co-curriculum arena which has as highlighted earlier remained Eurocentric in outlook resulting in the alienation of the cultural and epistemological capital of the majority of students. This is evidenced by the fact that most SD programmes negate students' cultural and onto-epistemological backgrounds and decolonising the university implies that SD practitioners should start to explore these so as to enhance identity and character formation in students.

Ngugi (1997) argues that the university in postcolonial Africa has continued to perpetuate colonial languages and identity formations by blindly following Eurocentric institutionalised systems without questioning their functions and purposes. The negation of indigenous African languages, culture and ways of knowing has resulted in the inferiorisation of the Africans and the continued imposition of identities by promoting Eurocentric consciousness. The continued promotion of Eurocentric epistemological canon in universities in the global South has also resulted in grand scale epistemicides of indigenous ways of knowing (Mignolo, 2009; Santos, 2014). The academic and co-curriculum programmes in African universities continue to promote Eurocentric onto-epistemology because of coloniality and neo-liberalism. An analysis of the impact of coloniality on higher education contextualises the need to critique SD and confront problems that inhibit efforts to imbed indigenous epistemologies into student growth and transformation. Considering the negative impact of neo-liberalism and coloniality, decolonisation of the university is imperative and decolonial theory will provide the guide on how to navigate the process.

### **3.3 Neo-liberalism and its impact on higher education**

Schroeder (2010) describes neo-liberalism as an ideology that favours the primacy of the free market, nominal state regulation of the economy and the supremacy of the individual as the rational economic player. In Zimbabwean higher education the impact of neo-liberalism has been felt through the reduction of state funding. In the early 1990's the Zimbabwean government adopted a neo-liberal economic policy which was called Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP). This policy caused a lot of socio-economic hardships because the government removed subsidies which shielded most of the working class and the poor from economic hardships. In the higher education sector, the impact of ESAP was felt through the removal of grants and the payment of fees by students. ESAP also meant universities' expenditure which was previously paid by government was now the responsibility of the clients i.e. the students. Neo-liberalism also forced universities to be corporatist in outlook implying that they had to be profitable and they also had to develop programmes that were attractive to the market in order to get research funds. SD programmes likewise had to develop programmes that were attractive to corporates to get funding. Under these circumstances only SD that fit the neo-liberal agenda of training transnational elites survived. Given this scenario, programmes that sought to promote indigenous epistemologies could not survive. Therefore, neo-liberalism has led to the destruction of subaltern epistemologies and cultural practises in sub-Saharan African higher education. Given the effect of neo-liberalism on higher education a comprehensive critique must be an integral cog in the drive to decolonise SD in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe.

Universities are contested spaces where there is a struggle for social control and the contest is on what constitutes knowledge, to whom as well as how and for what purpose shall it be taught (Reyes, 2016; Aldawood, 2018). The contest is also between Eurocentric ways of knowing and the indigenous epistemologies that have for long been silenced by the hegemonic influences of the West. This pertinent observation applies to SD as well where indigenous knowledges, values and cultures have been relegated and silenced from the curriculum. Thus, the university serves as a contested space because it is a colonised space in which Eurocentrism has continued its dominance over power and social control through neo-liberal policies and the silencing of indigenous epistemologies which Santos (2014, p. ix) described as "epistemologies of the South".

As already highlighted, colonial administrators established universities to function as platforms for the maintenance of a white racist Eurocentric system of power. Therefore, basing on this historical background the university largely continues to be a colonised space as it is run by a privileged elite that serves the interests of neo-liberalism.

In the same vein, Fúnez-Flores and Phillion, (2019) and Fúnez-Flores (2017) illustrate that universities serve as the locus for the formation and preservation of systems of thought that have contributed to the extermination of indigenous educational institutions. It is this same space that has allowed for the disarticulation, abrogation and subalternisation of indigenous African ways of knowing. Quijano (2000) opines that neo-liberalism has cemented the dominance of Eurocentrism in higher education. His assertion is based on the premise that Eurocentric perspectives are often implied requirements for academic promotion, publishing and accessing funding. Within this scope African scholars are reduced to data hunters and gatherers for theoretical formulation in Europe and North America because non-Eurocentric theories are derisively dismissed as lay man criticism or ideological polemics (Suarez-Krabbe, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The Sub-Saharan African university continues to be the site on which Euro-American epistemologies are reproduced culturally, ideologically, psychologically and materially. Ngugi (1992) elucidates that Eurocentrism is maintained in the curriculum through various platforms which include textbooks, pedagogy and theories at the expense of indigenous forms of knowledge. From a decolonial viewpoint it is imperative to dichotomise the university as a system in order to deracinate the neo-liberal thought which has continued to act as a channel for Eurocentrism's grip on the higher education curriculum well after the gaining of political independence. Focussing on the Zimbabwean higher education terrain, the Nziramasanga Commission into education and training bemoaned that Zimbabwean higher education has remained elitist and called for it to be reformed (Mavhunga, 2006). More than twenty years later the same concerns are still being raised and this signifies the amount of work that needs to be done to free it from the negative effects of neo-liberalism and globalisation.

The impact of neo-liberalism on higher education has reverberated through the transformation of universities into enterprises that imitate corporate structures. The result is that student development has suffered a great loss because it is considered as non-profit course making hence it is not prioritised in funding. SD programmes that are designed to incorporate indigenous knowledges suffer the most because they cannot be funded.



Even corporate donations determine which SD programmes receive funding since it is regarded as a form of workforce training. To this end neo-liberalism is viewed as the most dangerous ideology that threatens indigenous epistemologies in higher education by entrenching coloniality in SD and in the faculty as well. Out of class programmes that support neo-liberal philosophy are rewarded while those that detour from a Eurocentric ideology are muzzled (Grosfoguel, 2013). Neo-liberalism and globalisation maintain strong roots within the university system and what constitutes knowledge in the curriculum is defined by this matrix of power.

In its present form SD in universities in Sub-Saharan Africa is achieving what it was originally created for by the European colonisers, that is, to provide space for the entrenchment of Eurocentric power and social control. The Eurocentric coloniality of power is deeply ingrained in SD theories and models that are used in universities in sub-Saharan Africa. As highlighted in Chapter two, the widely used models of SD in Zimbabwean universities for example are the Social Change Model (SCM) and the Leadership Identity Model (LID) which lay emphasis on civic engagement and service learning. Therefore, to decolonise SD implies refocusing its purpose by creating conditions where theories and models of SD ingrain indigenous African epistemologies such as *hunhu/ubuntu*. The imbuing of indigenous knowledges into SD may lead to the production of graduates who do not aspire to be Europeans and who also value their culture and indigenous ways of knowing. This calls for the deconstruction of Eurocentric theories that are implanted into SD models and programmes through what decolonial theorists refer to as ‘inter-epistemic dialogues’ (Santos, 2014, p. ix) or what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 23) terms “ecologies of knowledges”. Maldonado-Torres (2017) argues that this would result in the deprovincialisation of Europe and North America and the reprovincialisation of indigenous African epistemologies leading to epistemological pluriversalism and the deconstruction of the current scenario where European ways of knowing are regarded as universal. Within this; perspective Suarez-Krabbe (2012) and Maldonado-Torres (2016) advocates for ‘epistemic *coyotismo*’ in which previously muzzled and inferiorised ways of knowing are mainstreamed in university curricular. Much more discussion on decoloniality will follow later in this chapter after analysing barriers to mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies into SD in higher education.

### **3.4 Decolonial Theory**

This section focuses on the struggles against the dominance of Euro -American ways of knowing in the domains of power, being, identity and knowledge production that resulted in the emergence of decoloniality as a paradigm to confront this hegemony of Eurocentrism long after the gaining of independence by countries in the global South. The origins of decoloniality can be traced to the intellectual works of theorists such as Enrique Dussel (2003), Arturo Escobar (2004), Anibal Quijano (2007), Ramon Grosfoguel (2003, 2013), Walter Mignolo (1999, 2007, 2009, 2013) and Maldonado-Torres (2016, 2017, 2019) in South America. On the African continent, the decolonial theory has been championed by leading intellectuals such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986, 1992, 1997), Achille Mbembe (2016), Mahmoud Mamdani (2016), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2021) and many other post-colonial thinkers like Wadada Nabudere (2007), Catherine Odora-Hoppers (2007, 2009), Shadrack Gutto (2015) and Pascal Mungwini (2016, 2017). In the same breadth the intellectual genealogy of decoloniality can also be attributed to early African anti-colonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon (1965) and Aime Cesaire (2008) who are regarded as the patriarchs of the Negritude Movement whose purpose was to assert pride in African cultural identity as a way of countering Eurocentrism that was imposed by the colonialists. Fanon and Cesaire's ideas were further galvanised by Arab intellectuals Memmi (2019) and Said (1994) who critiqued the psychological effects of colonialism on the Arabs. It is also noteworthy to focus on indigenous knowledge systems and intangible heritage theorists like Mapara (2009) and Ramose (1999) whose works have also played a phenomenal role in the shaping and reshaping of the decolonial theory in the southern African region.

As predecessors to decoloniality, postcolonialism and anti-colonialism discourses are significant to this study and a brief description of these theoretical frames will help clarify the distinction between these two from decoloniality and how they contributed to the rise of the latter. The paragraphs below provide snap descriptions of postcolonialism and anti-colonialism outlining how they shaped the development of decoloniality and their relevance to SD.

#### **3.4.1 Postcolonialism**

The genealogy of decoloniality theory is traced through two important discourses that shaped the struggle against colonial occupation and domination in Africa namely, postcolonialism and anti-colonialism (Shetty, 2018). Therefore, origin of postcolonialism is located within the

gambit of the theories that ground anti-colonial movements in Africa that incorporated political organisation, economic empowerment and physical resistance.

Hendrick and Young (2017) delineate that postcolonialism:

... reflects on the effects of colonialism with regards to cultural constructs, economic ideas, political formations and authority and institutionalised bureaucracies that have their own relationship to state building and colonialism, but also engages in self-reflexivity aimed at examining defects in subaltern thought, theories and realities (Hendrick & Young, 2017, p. 44).

Basing on this observation it is pertinent to note that self-reflexivity is a curricular practice that is central to social transformation which is the major aim of SD. It can also be noted that postcolonialism in this context is different from post-colonialism because the latter refers to a distinct period after the end of political rule by the West. On the other hand, postcolonialism is a movement that critically scrutinises the effects of colonialism both during and after political independence. It critically examines the racialized Eurocentric social, economic and the psychological effects of colonialism. Prominent scholarly works which fit in this paradigm include Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*. Mapara (2009) posits that postcolonialism is a domain of cultural and critical theory that has been used in the study of literary texts relating to the reading and writing of literature written in previously colonised countries. Its focus is on exposing the way literature by the colonisers distorted the experiences and realities of the colonised whose culture and epistemologies were subalternised and inferiorised by the colonisers. Postcolonialism also highlights the struggles of formerly colonised people as they grapple with issues of national and cultural identity as they fight to restore their culture and history that was distorted by the colonisers (Mapara, 2009). The author further elaborates that:

... as a theory it is anchored on binary oppositions where white is presented as superior while black and oriental are inferior...the West is presented as the standard, while non-Europeans are inferior and have to have their sensibilities and values cultivated so that they become like those of Europeans or at least approximate them (Mapara, 2009, p. 141).

Mapara (2009) indicates that postcolonialism should be viewed as a battle premised on the need to restore lost identity, culture, values and norms. It is within this scope that this study is undertaken to amplify the discourse on the need for the complete decolonisation of higher education in former colonies with specific reference to student development. The dominance

of Eurocentrism has remained strong in sub-Saharan African higher education institutions particularly in the domain of student development where students crave to be like Europeans because they are psyched into believing that whiteness is the standard of being. In relation to this thesis the remedy to this scenario could be found in adopting a decolonial approach through the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies in student development.

As highlighted above postcolonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa emerged from among other issues the anti-colonial struggles that fought for political, economic and cultural resistance to colonialism and neo-colonialism. It was pivotal in exposing the shortcomings of the anti-colonial liberation movements before and after they assumed political power. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) notes that the decolonisation process was led by an African elite that had been groomed and initiated into the Eurocentric ways of knowing. They breathed coloniality to the extent they became its missionaries and gatekeepers. He further argues that colonial university education had inculcated into the elite class values that alienated them from their communities to the extent that they considered themselves as the watchmen of the system. They suffered what William Dubois termed double consciousness and he characterised their situation as “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, and two warring ideas in one dark body” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 23). This situation clearly illustrates the importance of decoloniality theory for student development in African higher education.

In the same perspective, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) citing Fanon argues that the middle class that got into power after decolonisation was unscrupulous, parasitic and lacking the moral compass to take decolonisation to its logical conclusion. In concurrence with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), Mbembe (2015) and Tembo (2018) argue that in the aftermath of political independence the ruling elite manipulated the decolonisation process to preserve its interests and thus prevented the formation of an authentic national consciousness. In his literary works, such as *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982) and *Matigari* (1989) Ngugi portrays the neo-colonial ruling elite as greed, corrupt and more exploitative the indigenous African people than the colonisers. In his classification of the neo-colonial elite, Ngugi includes the politicians, business people, the judiciary, captains of industry and commerce and the religious leaders. Ngugi (1982, 1986 and 1989) blames the education system which was brought by the colonisers and perpetuated after the gaining of independence the native ruling elite for the production of such type of leadership.

Ngugi (1977) laments this sad scenario thus:

The university where they give our children an education to enfeeble minds, make them slaves, apes, parrots, shadows of the man and women they could have been. In the process of enslavement of their minds, the native elite without realising how much subjective the education they have received from the Western school style is, consider themselves as superior to their kinds (Ngugi, 1977, p. 23).

This observation by Ngugi (1977) is quite relevant to this study because the type of education which students in sub-Saharan Africa mirrors the exploitative elite which is described above. This proves that political leaders in sub-Saharan African countries protect education systems that alienate indigenous knowledges and consequently such an education system does not benefit the masses.

In relation to higher education, post-colonial reforms focussed on deracialisation of the academy within the university and piecemeal attempts were made to restructure the institutional form and curricular content of it (de Goede, 2017). The UZ for example, implemented some changes in the Faculty of Arts by bringing in African, Afro-American and Caribbean literature and African history in departments where Eurocentrism was dominant. Therefore, the adoption a decolonial approach is imperative to rid African universities and student development in particular of the images that portray them as carbon copies of European and American universities. As highlighted earlier this type of SD programming promotes the notion of being that destroys the African identity.

As a result, going forward from postcolonialism and anti-colonialism to decolonial approach in SD means that there is serious and real need to conscientise students and the academy not only about the history of colonialism and the decolonial projects it produced but to suggest ways to engage in active resistance to coloniality. Postcolonialism and anti-colonialism are different from decoloniality in that the latter was developed from the raw materials provided by the former. Anti-colonialism mainly focussed on removing European political domination in the global South. While both are strategies to fight colonisation and coloniality, postcolonialism dwells heavily on post-modern and post-structural thought. On the other hand, decoloniality aims to delink the global South from European coloniality (Mignolo, 2007).

Decoloniality is based on the realisation that the removal of European rule in the Global South and the assumption of political power by indigenous leaders in the Global South did not bring about genuine independence and freedom (Mignolo, 2013). This is mainly because the West maintained its grip on the former colonies through economic, cultural and epistemological

means through a process which decolonial theorists termed coloniality of power (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; Grosfoguel, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). These theorists analysed the matrix of coloniality and categorised it into three parts namely coloniality of power, coloniality of being and coloniality of knowledge. These aspects of coloniality are comprehensively explored below.

### **3.4.2 Coloniality of power, knowledge and being**

In the quest to seek a conceptual understanding of decolonial theory it is imperative to first comprehend the impact of colonisation and the pervasive on-going coloniality on student development. It is a reality that despite gaining political independence several decades ago, African states are trapped in a coloniality of power, knowledge and being nexus which extends to economic, cultural, linguistic and epistemological imposition by the West (Mignolo, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2003; Rose, 2003). Decoloniality has emerged in response to the hegemonic dominance of the Euro-American conceptualisation of modernity that justifies coloniality (Aldwood, 2018). Coloniality describes this pervasive dominance of Eurocentrism that continues well after the end of formal colonisation. Global coloniality continues to thwart decolonial initiatives aimed at loosening the grip of coloniality on the countries of the Global South and this shows that there still are limitations to the process of complete decolonisation because of the existing power dynamics between the global South and the imperial West. For genuine independence to occur there is need for the global South to delink from the exploitative and oppressive West leading to total political, economic and onto-epistemological freedom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2020). This control persisted through what decolonial theorists refer to as coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). The concept coloniality of power is used in this thesis to refer to the current asymmetrical global power structures where despite being independent, countries of the Global South continue to be politically and economically controlled by the West. Within this scope the concept coloniality of knowledge critically interrogates the epistemicides that facilitated in the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies leading to the colonisation of African minds.

Coloniality of being is used to reveal the complex processes of subjectivity that were employed to create inferiority complexes in the psyche of Africans (Maldonado-Torres, 2019). The researcher concurs with Maldonado-Torres (2016, 2019) and argues that through the formal and informal curriculum academics and SD practitioners have been mentally colonised to the extent that they have become the gate keepers of coloniality. To remedy the situation there is

need for academics and SD to develop SD models that imbue indigenous knowledges and shift from being mere consumers of Western theories and models.

The concept of coloniality of power was developed by Anibal Quijano, a South American decolonial theorist to explain how the Global South has not decolonised completely despite several decades of self-determination (Bailey, 2013). According to Quijano cited in Mignolo (2009) Eurocentrism as a system of power is based on a racial, gender, and property classification that even today constitutes global power. Under this system the West continues to control the world through its dominance of political and economic structures which *inter-alia* includes the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and World Economic Forum (WEF). It is through these organisations that Eurocentric economic privilege is maintained to the disadvantage of countries in the global South who are reduced to mere consumers of economic blueprints produced by these organisations. African countries are still engulfed in coloniality of power economically, culturally and epistemologically. It is interesting as an example of the coloniality of power to note that former French colonies have until late 2019 had their currency called the CFA Franc controlled by France. France also demanded that they keep their foreign currency reserves in the French Reserve Bank (Kindzeka, 2019). One may ask how the university and in particular SD is involved in maintaining this Eurocentric coloniality of power matrices.

The university from its original historical function has remained largely to produce elites and now its duty in the globalised neo-liberal world is focussed on the production of transnational elites (Suárez-Krabbe, 2012). In this perspective Castro-Gomez cited in Suarez-Krabbe (2012, p. 35) describes the university as “the triangular structure of coloniality of power, knowledge and being.” This denotes that the university in sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the vital link through which coloniality is maintained, in countries such as Zimbabwe. In the context of higher education in Zimbabwe the ways in which the university operates in the service of global coloniality are overt and varied.

The university continues to be one of the filters through which many of the members of the transnational elites and national leaders are produced. At local level most of the leaders of corporates, civic society, religion and politics are graduates of the university. At the global level, most of the leaders of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), representatives of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the African Development Bank (ADB), IMF and the WB and the various bodies of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) must have

passed through the university. Further, to enhance the production of transnational elites every year excellent graduates from local universities are offered scholarships, such as the Rhodes, Schevening, Commonwealth and Fulbright bursaries to pursue post-graduate studies in Western universities. Once they graduate they are employed in the UNO, WB, IMF, NGOs and Western funded Civic Organisations (COs). They are also recommended to head important ministries in governments of sub-Saharan Africa and one example that quickly comes to mind is that some of the ministers of government at independence were recruited from these organisations. This trend continues even today where members of the transnational elites are recruited to serve in important ministries in the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) such as Finance, Industry and Mines. It would appear as if heads of states in sub-Saharan Africa appoint members of the transnational elites into their government to appease the former colonisers. It is this strong influence on national politics that the West has that attests to the coloniality of power that it continues to exert on sub-Saharan African states.

The footprints of coloniality are largely visible, and universities in the Global South work closely with them since they provide funding for research projects that include SD programmes such as leadership training (Suárez-Krabbe, 2012). The approval for funding research projects is based on Eurocentric logic to determine what they refer to as scientific and useful knowledge and indigenous ways of knowing are usually discarded and thrown away (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The same method is employed in the systems used in the ranking of universities and journals that promote Eurocentric knowledge traditions are preferred for the purposes of publishing for promotion or to access funding. This requirement leads to the tendencies by universities in sub-Saharan Africa of prioritising programmes that are already recognised in the established rankings resulting in the denial of programmes that imbue indigenous knowledge space in the timetable (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). The result of such policy is the death of innovative programmes that strive to rejuvenate indigenous epistemologies in universities in the Global South. Consequently, the continued hegemony of Eurocentrism is enhanced while indigenous knowledges are subalternised.

Student development programmes are also trapped in the hegemonic dominance of Eurocentrism because the models and activities are framed by the supremacy of the transnational elites who control the funding institutions. Academics and student development practitioners who despite being in the Global South seem to be intellectually dependent and are uncritical of the excluding practices of Western knowledge (Suárez-Krabbe, 2009). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) argues that the docility of African intellectuals makes them accomplices and



enablers of epistemic violence of Eurocentric knowledge that is imparted in universities in sub-Saharan Africa.

What Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) addresses is that Eurocentric epistemologies are transmitted to students by SD practitioners who are convinced that Europe and the USA are the only places where rationality exists and the only places where models of SD are packaged. SD practitioners seem to be contented with this scenario where they perceive their duty as that of unpacking these models and dutifully deliver them to students without interrogating their rationality. Through coloniality of power enduring Eurocentric academic disciplines and the co-curriculum have produced a petit bourgeoisie leadership in Africa that is incapable of transforming the political, economic and social institutions that were inherited from colonialism into its own image rooted in indigenous traditions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). For higher education to produce graduates who fit into their societies there is need for a major epistemological and ontological decolonisation of the African mindsets and the university can play a major role in this project.

In relation to this study coloniality of power also looks into the psycho-social dimensions of student development where Eurocentrism exerted its destructive influence on epistemic, ontological and axiological domains of SD. It is seen through mental colonisation or cognitive domination which is expressed through racist dehumanisation, objectification and inferiorisation of Africans as portrayed in textbooks, films and co-curricular activities. Most of these productions which are cultural goods are given as donations to colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa. This development has resulted in African students shunning their blackness by using skin lightening creams to appear as whites as exemplified by the terms 'salads', 'nose brigades' and 'yellow bones'. The identity crisis leading to the rise of such stereotypes as 'nose brigades' and 'salads' has already been discussed in Chapter 2. In Southern African countries, female students who lighten their skins are known as 'yellow bones' (Makobela, 2017). Studies have shown that in black communities, a woman with a lighter complexion i.e. a yellow bone is privileged with a higher social status than one with a darker skin (Makobela, 2017).

Due to this idealisation African female youths strive to achieve this 'yellow bone' status often with disastrous consequences because some skin lighteners damage their skin. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) exposit that the quest by African youths to ape whiteness indicates that

Europeans succeeded in implanting negative images about blackness by modelling Europeanization into an aspiration for most African youths.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni observes that:

... the long term effect of this social engineering and epistemological process that was marked by epistemicides that invaded the core imaginary of the African psyche and culture to the extent that Africans today produce cultural Europeanization without direct tutelage of Europeans, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 194).

The psycho-social and epistemological damage that was done is quite deep and the challenge that faces African theorists and indeed SD practitioners is how to inverse this mental impairment. At the cultural and epistemological level most Africans are still stuck in Eurocentric thought and they breathe coloniality daily. To remedy this situation the researcher concurs with Mignolo (2009) who advocates for epistemic delinking from the West leading to the upliftment of indigenous epistemologies as new sites of knowledge production in the Global South.

### **3.4.3 Coloniality of Knowledge**

Coloniality of knowledge relates to the epistemic subjugation of indigenous knowledges and cultures. Further, coloniality of knowledge denotes the enduring structures of racism in the construction and reconstruction of knowledge which favour the Western epistemic canon against indigenous knowledges. This has killed the imagination and creativity of Africans to the extent that they have simply succumbed to the idea that their contribution to knowledge creation is to adopt Eurocentrism as the only valid knowledge production system. Smith (2019) opines that in addition to genocides Africa has suffered epistemicides, linguicides and culturecides in which indigenous African ways of knowing, languages and cultures were systematically destroyed. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) posits that the destruction of African ways of knowing and policies was a deliberate process of dissocialising African people out of their cultural and historical context. The author adds that:

Western enlightenment regarded the non-west variously known as the ancient, the orient, the primitive world, the third world, the under-developed world, the developing world and now the global south ... primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 18).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) assertion is that universities in sub-Saharan Africa are delivering curricular that denigrate their epistemologies and belief systems. This is so because as has been highlighted earlier, there were no major curricular reforms after the gaining of independence. Even if universities wanted to implement curricular reforms that embed indigenous knowledges they faced the hegemonic influence of neo-liberalism and Eurocentrism, epitomised through the control of funding for research.

The European colonisers committed epistemicides by promoting a Western epistemic canon that invisibilised and inferiorised indigenous ways of knowing. Invisibilisation implies that epistemological and theoretical priority is given Eurocentric perceptions, scientists and academics (Santos, 2014). Having succeeded in pushing the indigenous African ways of knowing to the periphery of epistemic canon they proceeded to make Western ways of knowing the only authentic and scientifically verifiable ways of comprehending the universe. Coloniality of knowledge reveals that Eurocentric knowledge production and neo-liberal practices have continued to silence other epistemologies by insisting on their universal validity (Santos, 2014). A critical analysis of the coloniality of knowledge is therefore of fundamental importance in pursuit of decolonising student development. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) presents the problems of coloniality of knowledge as characterised by several traits. Among these are the realities that:

- i) Eurocentric knowledges are privileged. It is because of this privileged that they are regarded as universalistic, neutral and objective. The fact that they are European or Western is not taken into consideration yet this is the reality – that they are situational and accordingly socio-cultural and thus native to those climes. In addition, there is the reality that;
- ii) Eurocentric racist hierarchies are established and maintained through a Eurocentric definition of knowledge and internalised through hegemonic discourses. This is given an impetus in higher education where it is sustained as well through the curriculum of universities and colleges in the formerly colonized countries (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021, p. 33).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) further observes that there is the locus of epistemic annunciation where knowledges are situated in the West at the expense of the subaltern ones that are largely situated in the Global South. All this occurs in an environment where there is the creation of a Eurocentric myth that posits that knowledge can be neutral and unlocated. This has led to the

tragedy that Western epistemologies are presented as the only universal truth and subaltern non-Western knowledges are regarded as particularistic.

Coloniality of power in African universities is maintained through the silencing of other theories such as postcolonial, indigenous knowledge systems and decolonial (Grosfoguel, Margarita and Rodriguez, 2002; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018.; Santos, 2014). These theories are silenced by being regarded as outdated and thus are considered to be lacking validity (Santos, 2014). Coloniality of knowledge explains that colonial domination does not only include political and economic hegemony but it can also be epistemological through the privileging of Euro-American knowledges as universal (Smith, 2019).

Coloniality is the bedrock of modernity because it represents the rationalisation of concepts and forms of knowledge that support relationships of subordination (Gilroy, 1996; Hendrick and Young, 2017). Coloniality of knowledge also defines the structural aspects of domination in which oppression and exploitation are based on epistemological and racialist lines (Smith, 2019).

It is in this context that decoloniality seeks to address the problem of coloniality of knowledge which manifested itself in the form of mental invasion of the colonised people. Student leadership development is one of the domains where Western epistemic hegemony is still dominant hence the need to redress this through the mainstreaming of indigenous African epistemologies.

#### **3.4.4 Coloniality of Being**

Coloniality of being involves the exclusion of ontology and practices of the subjugated people for the benefit of coloniality of power (Mignolo, 2011). Coloniality has divided the world into zones of being and non-being and this frame provides useful analytical evidence to explore the various levels of our global geo-politics (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Coloniality has an overarching bearing on the intra-psychic as well as structural levels of student development in African higher education. In support of this view, Smith (2019) quotes Cesaire thus:

I am talking of millions of men, who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair and abasement (Smith, 2019, p. 11).

This proves that colonisation was a dehumanising experience as people's cultures were destroyed leading to what Cesaire termed 'Thingification' of indigenous people which was

quite a dehumanising experience (Freire and Shor, 1987). Thingification is achieved through the disabling of psycho-social capabilities emanating from the negation of being, culture and personality (Ngugi, 1997).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) postulates that the Eurocentric modernity initiated the colonisation of being through its classification and hierarchisation of human beings according to race whereby whites were categorised as superior to other races. This racist categorisation has always been used to deny Africans the completeness of being so as to justify their treatment as inferior.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) adds that:

African subjectivity that emerged from these processes of racialisation and inferiorisation of blackness is one that has diminished ontological density, It became a subject that was characterised by a catalogue of deficits and a series of lacks ... such as lack of souls, writing, civilisation, democracy, development, human rights and ethics (2018, p. 197).

Basing on these racist processes, Africans were treated as the doomed people of the earth and this scenario is graphically portrayed by Frantz Fanon (1965) in his book the *Wretched of the Earth*. In another treatise *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon (2008) argues that the subjectivity of the colonised is constructed through white assimilation leading to the fragmentation of the colonised. He depicts the colonised African as wearing a white mask which produces in him/her a deep sense of self-doubt, inferiority and ultimately ontological insecurity. This dehumanising experience faced by Africans which was presented as a necessary process of civilisation resulting in the denial of being to the Africans has persisted well after political decolonisation and is presented in this thesis as coloniality of being. The construct that inspired Fanon's work was to overcome this condition of inferiority and for fanon embracing of blackness was the key to achieving ontological security.

Colonisation implanted into the minds of the Africans the belief that it came to lighten their darkness and to some extent the belief that if settlers were to leave, they would fall back to savagery and degradation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This type of coloniality is preserved in textbooks, media and other outlets of Euro-American ideas in institutions of higher learning in Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In support of this argument, Ngugi (1997) advocates for decoloniality to redress the condition in which Eurocentric ways of knowing and values have invaded the mental universe of the colonised people resulting in the removal of the hard disc of previous African memory reminiscence which had been replaced by the insertion of the

software of European and American forms of knowledge. Perceiving herself/himself as the shadow of the white coloniser, the African has accepted and internalised a sense of inferiority.

Coloniality has demeaned indigenous African onto-epistemologies and cultures in an attempt to silence them. Mignolo (2011) posits that through coloniality Eurocentrism has spread its Western practices and values. These have now been imposed on Africans and other peoples of the Global South as personal and cultural identities for them to adopt resulting in the subalternisation of their cultures, languages, epistemologies and ontologies. For example, in West Africa French is now accepted as an African language, while in South Africa and Namibia the same is true of Afrikaans (Shizha, 2015). African people's social, political, economic, cultural and psychological life has been modelled in way that reflects Euro-American life styles and world views. African people have continued to be alienated by Euro-American ways of knowing and systems of subjectivity that oppress and exploit them in terms of political power in addition to areas such as epistemic and cultural values that are esteemed and protected.

The analysis outlined above exposes coloniality of power, knowledge and being as epistemic racism that goes beyond the suppression of African people's affective and imaginative potential to what (De Lissovoy, 2010) describes as onto-epistemic terrorism. This is because Eurocentrism has created an enclosure on knowledge construction and reconstruction, and this enclosure has evicted other epistemologies from the realm of knowledge creation. Therefore, student development practitioners and theorists in African universities should be wary the enduring epistemic racism infused in Eurocentric ideology that guides academic and SD practices in their institutions. Decoloniality presents them with an alternative way of theorising and modelling SD to effectively decolonise power, knowledge and being in Africa. Maldonado-Torres' (2016) argument that the university should become an engine of decoloniality by facilitating the creation of ideas that advance the unfinished business of decolonisation is instructive. Decoloniality should be adopted by SD practitioners to guide them in their efforts to dismantle the coloniality of power matrix that continue to exist after formal independence in Africa. The section below will look at decolonial theory in detail.

### **3.4.5 Epistemic decoloniality for student development**

Higher education in the Global South is still dominated by Eurocentric epistemologies and structures of power and hierarchy that the West continues to use to exclude marginalised indigenous voices (De Lissovoy, 2010). These structures of power and hierarchies determine the parameters of what can included or excluded in student development practice.

Some of the hierarchies that are related to this study include epistemic hierarchies that privilege Western knowledge, a linguistic pyramid that privileges European languages such as English and French and an ethnic hierarchy that privileges European and North American people (Dietz, Negron-Muntaner & Grosfoguel, 2006). Maldonado-Torres (2017) concurs with this view stating that Eurocentric hierarchies go beyond the domains of politics and economics to include language, logic and cultures since the oppressed people are viewed and presented as lesser versions of European modernity. These diverse dynamics of coloniality have been described by Mignolo (2011) as the colonial matrix of power. Epistemic decoloniality seeks to deconstruct this Eurocentric culture and epistemology by creating space for indigenous cultures, languages and epistemologies in student development.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), decolonisation of knowledge implies the ‘deprovincialisation’ of Europe and conversely the ‘re-provincialisation’ of Africa in order to achieve epistemic freedom. The author adds that ‘de-reprovincialisation’ involves the rise of the descendants of the colonised in the academies of the world asserting the validity and legitimacy of their knowledge systems. In the same breadth ‘provincialisation’ of Europe is an epistemic struggle meant to confront the over-representation of European thought in knowledge, social theory and education. This implies that Africans have the freedom to think, theorise, interpret the world and develop their own methodologies unfettered by Eurocentrism. With this development Africa could then become the centre of understanding itself, in co-existence with European epistemologies that are relevant to the African situation (Mungwini, 2017). In relation to student development practice it means that student affairs practitioners will have to model leadership development guided by indigenous African ways of knowing, cultures and languages. Decoloniality of knowledge in student development should, therefore, reinvigorate theoretical perspectives from theorists of the Global South in order to create what Grosfoguel (2007) describes as a pluriversal world. Knowledge from the Global South should be given access in student development theory building so as to counter hegemonic Eurocentrism and this would achieve cognitive justice for Africans (Odora-Hoppers, 2007; Santos, 2014).

The realm of knowledge production and legitimation has always been ‘situated’. This denotes that it has always originated from the geographical boundaries, spaces and places that are within the Euro-American zone. Decoloniality of student development entails shifting its geography and body politics from Europe and North America and thus to Africa and other countries of the Global South and promote them from the ‘zone of non-being’ to the ‘zone of

being'. Decolonisation also involves liberating student development theory from its embeddedness in the colonial matrix of power that conceals its racism, gender bias and sexism. Delinking student development theory from the geo-political and body political locations situated in the West exposes the myth that Western knowledge is universal and as such it is not situated in any particular location (Grosfoguel, 2007). Eurocentrism is racist in that it peddles the unproven lie that African and other indigenous knowledges are particularistic and are not capable of reaching the same universalism as Eurocentric knowledge. It is this lie that has led to the hierarchisation of Western knowledge as superior to African indigenous knowledge and therefore created the notion that Eurocentric knowledge can be packaged and exported to African countries in order to modernise them according to Western standards (Mignolo, 2011).

The purpose of the decoloniality of student development must be to evaluate the current status of knowledge, guiding its development and practice. Such evaluation should lead to the posing of questions such as those that seek to uncover how knowledge in student development is produced. It should ask questions such as: By whom? For whom? Who validates it? For what purpose? This evaluation helps us comprehend why Eurocentric epistemologies are always accepted as valid while African knowledges are delegitimized. The delegitimation of African indigenous knowledges and the labelling of their places of origin as economically under-developed creates what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 23) quoting Quijano terms a 'colonial wound'. The healing of the 'colonial wound' requires the application of a decolonial mind that conceptualises knowledge and ways of knowing beyond the Eurocentric canon and the adoption of inter-epistemic dialogue between the indigenous African and Eurocentric epistemologies to create a pluriversal epistemology (Wallerstein, 2011). Complementing Wallerstein, it is important to bring into focus Mignolo's (2009, p. 50) call for the need to repudiate the West's claim to epistemological exceptionalism through 'epistemic disobedience'.

What Mignolo (2009) refers to as epistemic disobedience is epistemic delinking from the entrapping of coloniality such as languages, categories of thought, belief systems and subjectivity. Engaging in the delinking project leads to the cutting of the umbilical cord that links theory making to Eurocentrism. This results in the creation for new sites of knowledge production and reproduction in the Global South.

Epistemological decoloniality is required to pave the way for inter-epistemic and inter-cultural dialogue between the West and the Global South. One of the reasons for the enduring



persistence of coloniality in SD in Zimbabwean universities is the failure to change the theoretical and philosophical framework underpinning it. Decoloniality should lead to the planting of the ideology of pluriversalism as opposed to Western universalism. This will create conditions necessary for true cultural and epistemological liberation in student development. The mainstreaming of indigenous ways of knowing in student leadership development “constitutes the drive for a restorative epistemic agenda and process that simultaneously addresses ontological and epistemological issues haunting Africa” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 16). There is need to recognise the epistemological diversity by acknowledging and promoting indigenous African epistemologies in SD in sub-Saharan African universities. From this perspective and as a complimentary to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Baker (2012) explicates that decoloniality is a necessary project towards the liberation of knowledge from the perspective of coloniality so as to produce a multi-civilisation world system. This new inter-epistemic world system will no longer be based on civilised-savage paradigm and epistemologies from the Global South will no longer be subalternised or othered. This process will involve the recognition and inclusion of the epistemologies that were previously suppressed by Eurocentrism.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century SD should capacitate students to self-reflect on their civilizational consciousness as well as to empower them to engage in inter and intra-civilizational dialogue (Bailon and De-Lissovoy, 2018). However, dialogue can take place when coloniality is decolonised and when the mono-epistemic position of Eurocentrism is no longer enforced as universally binding. Santos (2008) articulates that ecologies of knowledge strategy can be used to bring together multiple different civilisations, epistemologies and cultures. SD practitioners may design their programmes for students to learn and compare when considering issues of leadership at local and global level.

The point of departure of the decolonial theorists is that different human societies produce different forms of observing the world, such that SD theoretical design requires more than Eurocentric epistemologies. This implies that SD models based on Western knowledge systems cannot claim universal applicability because they are partial, situational and incomplete. From this perspective pluriversalism denotes that epistemologies from the global South can no longer be considered inferior, uncivilised and not part of the canon of thought.

The analysis outlined above exposes SD as being tied to the project of reproducing the matrix of coloniality not only through the reproduction of particular orientations, biases and

preferences among students but also a question of the compulsive reiteration of the ethical and epistemological order of Eurocentrism. In line with the decolonial project advocated by theorists such as Dussei (2003), Mignolo (2013), Grosfoguel (2013), Santos (2014) Maldonado-Torres (2019) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) to mention just a few, this thesis articulates the need to reinvigorate the indigenous epistemologies of the Global South in order to decolonise the structure of knowledge in the Westernised universities. Within this spectrum decoloniality means breaking with the current scenario where Western epistemology defines the rest of the world. Decolonisation of the curriculum entails the foregrounding of indigenous epistemologies into the students' learning experiences which have been dominated by Eurocentrism for centuries (Teffer, 2017). This denotes bringing epistemic diversity into SD theory making so as to create a pluriverse of meaning and concepts in leadership development in Sub-Saharan Africa higher education.

The following section examines ways in which Eurocentrism has subjugated indigenous ways of knowing in the development of SD theories and models. This is then followed by a brief decolonial critique of some SD models that permeate the Sub-Saharan Africa higher education sector.

### **3.5 Critiques of Student Development Practice**

Critiques of student development vary from feministic to cultural relativistic perceptions. They appraise its conceptualisation particularly its ambivalence to indigenous African culture and the gender bias of its models which seemingly are written by men for male students. The prominent critique of student development has come from feminist and cultural relativist theorists who are critical of its role, purpose and function which is framed through a patriarchal and Eurocentric lens (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). Feminist theorists also argue that student development theories and models portray the myth of being universal yet they exclude the intellectual work of women.

Prominent decolonial theorists such as Mohanty (2003) in Suárez-Krabbe (2012) posit that Western theories and models are loaded with the coloniality of gender. In supporting this view Ortega (2017) cited in (Aldawood, 2018) advocates the need to decolonise the masculine imperialist ideology in theories and models. This includes SD theories which as has been exposed by several feminist scholars are silent on the contributions of women to their development (Youante, 2017). They also argue that the mere incorporation of the historically, socially and politically excluded groups like women into established institutions without

challenging their hegemonic dominance may maintain the status quo rather than revolutionise it. Advocacy for the social inclusion of gender sensitive programmes in student development should be more than just their mere assimilation into the mainstream.

Cultural relativist theorists argue that humanity is culturally relative and discourse concerning student development only considers the definition of humanity that depicts the Western cultural perspective which is not proper (Freire, 2005; Sharma, Lopez, Mekiana, Ctibor & Church, 2013). The following section discusses each of these critiques which is then followed by the decolonial critique.

### **3.5.1 Feminist Critique of Student Development**

Central to feminist critique of student development is the depiction of women in student development where their experiences are inferiorised when compared to those of men (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn, 2010). The co-curriculum activities that are usually used such as sports, societies, participation in student governance as well as other leadership initiatives which focus on leadership development are constructed with heavy overtones of patriarchy and white middle-class culture. Feminists are concerned that a male model was used to construct theories and it is those models that are now presented as universal truths. In these models women are constructed as in need and obtain their status through their relationships with men in society (Appiah, Benhabib, Young & Fraser, 2007; Carolissen, 2014). It is also argued that traditional approaches to student development privilege male students through prioritising them over economic, social and leadership issues. The critique that co-curriculum has been defined within a male construct brings into question whether the leadership development needs of women can adequately be met using the current framework. Using the feminist social inclusion framework, the researcher argues that the way in which student development is traditionally structured at universities marginalises women.

The above is true of SD in Zimbabwean universities where males dominate leadership positions in student clubs, sports and student governance bodies such as the Student Representative Council (SRC). This situation obtains because of the models and structures that were inherited from the colonial university which are enduring in SD in Zimbabwean universities today.

### 3.5.2 Cultural Relativist Critique

Cultural relativists also argue against the prevailing student development framework basing on four concepts the first one being that, all cultures are not recognised within the co-curriculum framework. This argument is premised on the fact that Eurocentric culture is pervasive in student development programmes. Secondly, cultural relativist theorists state that student development activities catered for in the prevailing framework are based upon the concept of liberal individualism and they are imperialistic. The counter viewpoint proffered by scholars from the Global South lays greater emphasis on indigenous cultures and epistemologies. There are loud calls from the culture relativists that there is need to establish pluriversalism rather than universalism in SD. Carolissen (2014) in Madambi and Mangena (2016) posits that student development in higher education is ambivalent to the cultural backgrounds of students because it socialises them into the capitalist middle class culture of Anglo-Saxons. She adds that universities more often than not privilege students who participate in clubs and societies that offer a discursive socialisation on neo-liberal competencies like public speaking and debating that help in the acquisition of communication and leadership skills that are Eurocentric. Carolissen (2014) in Madambi and Mangena (2016) further adds that there is inherent cultural inequality in school-based socialisation such as through societies and clubs.

The third concept which cultural relativists deal with is their advocacy for pluriversalism rather universalism. This concept has already been explained above. The clarion call on this concept is that student co-curricular activities should embrace an eclectic epistemological approach where Eurocentric and for instance African ways of knowing and cultures are accommodated in student development. The fourth concept is closely related to the third one, where cultural relativist theorists postulate that truth and knowledge are cultural constructs which have been theorised and accepted as universal truths basing on Eurocentrism while African and other non-Western indigenous ways of knowing were excluded.

They also argue that student development has been constructed on the tenets of liberal universalism, a construct that is Western but is conceptually absent from African cultures where group membership and identity is more important than focus on the individual (Batas and Negara, 2012; Greer, Mignolo & Quilligan, 2013). Student development based on Eurocentric cultural and epistemological norms creates a framework that is anchored on an individualistic ideology that is perceived by Africans among other indigenous communities as foreign and imperialistic.

### 3.5.3 Decolonial critique

Decoloniality is a relatively new theory but its essence in the critique of student development theories is quite significant as it shares some of the concerns raised by feminist and cultural relativist critiques, like opposition to Eurocentrism with its hierarchies of gender, racism and a rejection of culturally constructed universalism that segregates other ways of knowing inclusive of indigenous African knowledges. However, the similarity ends there, because decoloniality theorists unlike feminist and cultural relativist theorists focus on coloniality as the basis of the Eurocentric liberal tradition of co-curricular activities in higher education. Decoloniality critiques the belief that the West is the foundational pillar of all student development knowledge and the myth that this knowledge is universal and objective. The dominant theory of student development has its genealogy in the history of European liberalism and cannot be considered to be universally valid. This, therefore paves the way for the re-writing and re-righting of its geo-political context (Valverde, 2005). The Eurocentric history of student development theories does not mean that it has to be discarded because decoloniality does not imply that Eurocentric history and related narratives have to be thrown into the dust bin but that they dialogue with other epistemologies in order to redefine them and redeem them from their monologue (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This implies that decoloniality privileges epistemologies flowing from the Global South without necessarily throwing away enlightened aspects of Eurocentric ways of knowing.

Student development discourse in the Zimbabwean higher education milieu is hegemonically Western, and it does not recognise the dignity of indigenous African traditions and ways of knowing. Its liberal tradition perpetuates imperialistic conceptualisations of it, and conceals its true Euro-American agenda of achieving domination. It is common cause that the co-curriculum in universities in sub-Saharan Africa lacks non-European epistemologies, and that it has been dominated by Western theory. Consequently, this has negatively affected its legitimacy and its potential to usher in innovative transformational dimensions. The application of decoloniality praxis to student development unravels its Eurocentric origins. Decoloniality has also exposed the means through which the West has sought to exclude and silence African and other voices in the Global South in order to entrench its colonial dominance and perpetuate coloniality especially in Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Tshipaka, 2018).

### 3.6 Decolonising Student Development Models

Student development in post-colonial higher education in Africa has failed to transform and provide culturally appropriate leadership development models that mainstream indigenous African epistemologies and policies. Madambi and Mangena (2016) propound that student development has remained immersed in Eurocentric epistemologies as evidenced by the fact that dominant student development models do not imbue indigenous African epistemologies. Some of the models that are used have created identity problems for African students because most of them were developed with white male students in mind (Kuh *et al.*, 2006; Schafer & King, 1990). This study proposes the development of decolonial models that imbue *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology as alternative paradigms for student leadership development in Zimbabwean higher education. Despite the inappropriateness of these models in African contexts, they are often presented as holding universal truths yet they presume African knowledges to be non-existent. Therefore, calls for the epistemic decolonisation of student development models entail more than just the introduction of new theoretical content to indigenise them. Student development brags of a varied frame of models whose function is to understand the hidden and co-curricular experience. These theories and models include the involvement concept that was developed by Astin (2005), student development theory by Chickering and the Inputs-Environment-Output (IEO) as well as Social Change Model (Segawa, 2011, Long, 2012b; Nyar, 2016; Kezar *et al.*, 2017). This section will not focus on these theories *per se* since they have been already examined in chapter two above and also the researcher would like to focus on larger conceptual issues such as themes and frames for decoloniality.

An interrogation of student development in Zimbabwean higher education reveals that the system uses a hybrid of models grounded that are in Anglo-American contexts. A further analysis of these models shows that they are heavily embedded in the coloniality of power matrix which breathes gender bias, racism and sexism into them (Mignolo, 2009). The foundational ideologies of student development models have their roots in the Euro-American project for the expansion of colonial power, racist capitalism and coloniality.

Their historical purpose was grounded in social engineering and the promotion of white racist capitalism (Smith, 2019). The imposition of student development models whose genealogies is be traced to Western power backed by hegemonic Euro-American epistemologies has resulted in the colonisation the of African imagination and the formation of confused identities

(Masolo, 2007; Mapara, 2009). The confinement of African knowledges to the margins of society and at the periphery of global intellectual and academic space has negatively impacted on higher education students' development of identity and consciousness.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) African higher education is facing three major crises centring on legitimacy, hegemony and relevance. The hegemonic crisis is constructed on the accusation that universities are functioning as production centre of elitism, bourgeoisie culture and the so-called universal culture grounded on Eurocentrism at the expense of African and other indigenous epistemologies. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) explains the crisis of legitimacy as centring on universities that were inherited from colonialists, for example the UZ. In the case of the UZ, during colonial era it was complicity in racism, sexism, patriarchy, colonialism, epistemicides, linguicides, culturecides and alienation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Post-colonial attempts to reform it have mainly centred on deracialising of the academy but falling short on interrogating epistemological, axiological and ontological assumptions informing the curriculum. Indigenous African culture and ways of knowing have largely failed to make inroads into the curriculum including in student development programmes where neo-liberalism and coloniality have remained entrenched. For example, the higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have prioritised Western knowledges that promote the conception of knowledge in terms of technicism and innovation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Under this paradigm indigenous knowledges are despised in favour of Eurocentric knowledge that lay emphasis on training in descriptive and quantitative data collection techniques. This penchant for quantification of complex human phenomena reinforces the coloniality of western knowledge since social sciences which are not easily amenable to quantification are inferiorised and underfunded. Several state universities in Zimbabwe suffer from the same crisis since they were 'mothered' by the UZ and adopted its policies and systems. Therefore, a decolonial agenda is necessary to interrogate and problematize the existing Eurocentric epistemology, theories and models. Africa and other societies of the Global South need to be privileged as legitimate sites of knowledge construction so that they regain their virtue as repositories of knowledge.

Lastly, the crisis of relevance relates to the labelling of universities as ivory towers because of their lack of social embeddedness and community connectedness. As highlighted earlier in this chapter neo-liberalism and globalisation have set norms and standards that determine what is learnt or researched and how it is delivered to further the interests of global capitalist elites (Castells, 2010). As highlighted earlier, the hidden and co-curricular programmes in sub-

Saharan African higher education are designed to meet the demands of global capitalism. For instance, some student organisations are sponsored by big corporates so as to initiate students into the Eurocentric culture of transnational elites. Students therefore end up designing innovations and programmes that are not calibrated to solve the problems of the local community or the society such that the community ends up questioning the relevance of institutions of higher learning especially state universities which are funded by tax payers' money.

The decolonisation of student development models is imperative in order to re-open basic epistemological questions as this would create space for subalternised knowledges and cultures to be brought into the academy and indeed student development (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Decolonisation of student development models removes the confusion that stems from the belief that 'whiteness' is superior to 'blackness' imposed on Africans by Eurocentric models whose impact is the creation of the desire by African youths to be white. Coloniality of power concealed in student development models has corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of African youths. The result has been the detrimental effect of lack of self-concept, self-efficacy and the creation of a pseudo-Euro-African elite whose destiny is to live like Europeans (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Said, 1989). Neo-liberal models of student development produce graduates that are alienated from their communities because of their fascination by the lifestyles of the European capitalist class to the extent that they now consider themselves to be Europeans.

This study advocates for the decoloniality of the prevailing student development approaches that are ontogenic, i.e., those which prioritise the individual as opposed to those which promote group solidarity. This works against the African *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy that encourages group solidarity, empathy and sympathy for others as embodied in the axiom *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* literally translated as 'I am because we are, we are because I am'. Smith (2019) concurs adding that emphasis needs to be laid on the development of sociogenic models that promote indigenous African cultures, languages, history and epistemologies.

This approach is based on the notion that inferiority is a two-pronged process that involves the internalisation of subjective inferiority and socio-economic inferiority complexes. This conceptualisation of inferiority complexes demands a serious interrogation of student development practices. Eurocentric models result in mental colonisation of students in the global South that partake in such co-curricular activities. The product of mental colonisation is the creation of youths who tend to hate themselves and wish to be white as they always look at



themselves with the lenses of Europeans. This is primarily because Eurocentric approaches are constructed as being neutral yet they are embedded with hierarchies of racism which instils the feelings of shame and inferiorities which leads to the internalisation of negative identities and consciousness in students.

Ngugi (1986) describes another form of coloniality that targets the history of the subjugated people so as to distort, disfigure and destroy their past. Smith (2019) adds that the enforcement of the colonisers' culture and history among the colonised creates a psyche of aspiring towards a white western culture. The author further notes that this creates cultural dissonance among them. This directly relates to student development in Zimbabwean higher education where students imbibe Eurocentric culture and epistemologies resulting in the inferiorisation of indigenous cultures and history. Student development practitioners need to design models that must facilitate the process of reclaiming indigenous ways of knowing, languages, folklores and other traditional practices that re-invigorate indigenous African culture and traditions.

Decoloniality challenges the designers of student development programmes to embrace indigenous languages, cultures and ways of knowing so as to transform the individual, the community and society.

### **3.7 Decolonial Criteria for Student Development**

The key criteria for the development of a decolonial approach for this study derives from an analysis of several intellectual writings on decoloniality which *inter alia* include the works of Ngugi (1992, 1986); Grosfoguel (2003, 2007, 2013); Odora Hoppers (2007, 2009); Mignolo (2007, 2009, 2013); De Lissovoy (2010); Suarez-Krabbe (2012); Mbembe (2016); Magoqwana (2018); Mamdani (2016); Smith (2019) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2021). A critical analysis of their work provides key benchmarks that can be referenced to as points of departure in evaluating student development practice in Zimbabwean higher education.

An application of these standards and norms would help in determining the extents to which decolonial approaches have been used in student development practice. Decolonial theorists mentioned above have provided benchmarks for decolonisation by clearly articulating the tenets of decoloniality. They have also impressed on the need to recognise the absence of non-European epistemologies in the academic and co-curriculum including student development. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) argues that colonisation has resulted in the subalternisation of non-

Western epistemologies that need to be reinvigorated and compared to Eurocentric knowledges and the failure to consider these epistemologies will lead to the maintenance of epistemological coloniality. Maldonado-Torres (2016, 2017) posits that Eurocentric knowledges need tempering through the inclusion of indigenous epistemologies from the Global South. In concurring with this viewpoint, Ngugi (1992) emphasizes the need for debating on which social identities are afforded voice and authority in higher education. Similarly, this research also questions the continuation of Eurocentric hegemony in SD in Sub-Saharan African higher education. This thesis takes the debate to another level by amplifying the need to engage African and other epistemologies indigenous in higher education.

Coloniality has entrenched Euro-American epistemologies at the expense of non-Eurocentric ones and the latter need to be re-invented and used in comparison to those of Western origin. Failure to bring indigenous knowledges and belief systems on board will be akin to abetting continuance of epistemicides and culturecides of African and other indigenous theories of knowledge in student development. The hegemonic dominance of Eurocentrism in student development theory making and practice needs to be tempered with through the inclusion of discourses and knowledges that emerge from the subaltern (Dietz *et al.*, 2006; Grosfoguel, 2003, 2007). Similar articulations on how to engage a decolonising methodology have been proffered by several decoloniality theorists like (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Keane, 2017; Keane, Khupe & Muza, 2016). These scholars have developed criteria for defining decolonial methodology which can be applied to research and student development theory and practice. Their criteria interrogate the origin or source of beliefs and cultures informing a programme, who the intended beneficiaries are, how they would benefit and any negative impact on the beneficiaries. In the same perspective student development practitioners should be concerned with how students are benefiting or being disadvantaged with the way student development is framed and practised.

This research is premised on the decolonial belief that SD theories that fail to take into consideration the epistemicides that have occurred over several years will not accurately embody the interests of indigenous people of the Global South. (Sitwala, 2018) contends that it is necessary to analyse and understand how the effects of colonialism have been concretised by indigenous petit bourgeoisie. Within this context, Ngugi (1992) postulates that designers of curricular context and instruction must develop a decolonial consciousness that empowers students with analytical skills for social transformation.

The researcher argues that traditional backgrounds of students should be considered in the planning and development of co-curricular programmes to ensure that their beliefs, traditions and culture are immersed in these programmes. It is important to remember that in the Zimbabwean higher education milieu students come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These must be considered over and above the major Shona and Ndebele cultures and languages. Students from minority ethnic groups such as Xangani/Tsonga, Venda, Chewa, Nambya, Kalanga and Tonga need to be catered for. While it is critical to be concerned about the dominance of Eurocentrism it is equally worrisome to ignore the local hegemony of Ndebele and Shona languages and culture in Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) further elaborates that historians and likewise student development theorists in Zimbabwe should avoid making the:

...error of the tendency to conflate diverse identities into Ndebele and Shona groups and in the process undermine the country's social pluralism through alienating other indigenous groups e.g., Ndau, Kalanga, Venda, Xangani, Tonga, and Nambya (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015, p. 190).

This critical approach provides for the development of an epistemic perspective that requires that knowledge as a concept be extended beyond the Eurocentric canon and hegemonic tendencies within the subaltern epistemologies. Whites are not being marginalised in this assessment because culturally, linguistically and epistemologically they are historically privileged because of colonialism and neo-liberalism. Considering this historical background, the researcher contends that SD has the capacity to influence the building of a shared identity among Zimbabweans. This common Zimbabwean identity can be moulded around *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology that is common among these tribal groups. The next section examines *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy as humanisation criteria for decoloniality.

### **3.8 *Hunhu/Ubuntu* as a humanisation criterion for decolonisation**

Advocating for humanisation as a decolonial tool Smith (2019) argues it has the capacity of awakening indigenous people on how degrading their conditions are, and how such inhuman conditions prohibit them from becoming fully human. The implication of such an insight for student development practitioners is that learners need to be involved in critical thinking through liberatory education. To enhance student leadership transformation and achieve humanisation, indigenous epistemologies such as *hunhu/ubuntu* must be brought to the fore to enhance solidarity which is ideal for community wellness. The co-curriculum civic engagement activities need to be planned in a way that challenges students to be agents of positive social

change in their communities. Through embedding *hunhu/ubuntu* into student development programmes the individual, community, environment and society can be transformed unlike Eurocentric paradigms which focus on the individual only (Keane, Khupe & Muza, 2016; Smith, 2019). *Hunhu/Ubuntu* epistemology imparts humane values that moulds the youths into responsible and dignified citizens in the community (Mapara, 2013). It emphasises on good behaviour and deeds such as caring the less disadvantaged in the society and respecting the elders. Decolonisation of the SD programming entails the foregrounding of indigenous knowledges such as *hunhu/ubuntu* that instil good behaviour and deeds that build patriotic citizens for the society.

### **3.9 Conscientisation as criteria for decolonisation**

Building on the definition by Paulo Freire, Smith (2019) defines conscientisation as a process of discovering relationships of domination and oppression and moving towards critical consciousness. The subalternisation of indigenous ways of knowing and the racist privileging of Eurocentric epistemologies needs to be interrogated through robust co-curricular activities like song and dance and poetry. Another form of awakening programme could be adopting the *dare/magkotla* model where learners gather together for story-telling. This approach is based on long standing practice among the Bantu of sub-Saharan Africa where the young would gather around a fire in the evenings to listen to folktales. According to Mapara (2013), *ngano* or folktales are a major vehicle to impart virtues and values to the younger generations among the Bantus of Africa. These co-curricular activities must expose the structures of domination that maintain and promote culturecides, linguicides and identicides inherent in Eurocentric models (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In the purview of Friere (2005) education should help learners to think dialectically denoting that that education should help raise the critical consciousness of the learner.

Applying this approach to SD is critical since consciousness acts as a vehicle for cultural and epistemological emancipation that frees the learner from the monologue of Eurocentrism. Student development activities must lead students into a re-awakening to the fact that they live in a poly-epistemic world. This may thus lead them into an inter-epistemic process which Fanon describes as a critical reflection and action leading to praxis (Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Sefa Dei, 2010).

### 3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted that the birth and development of student development in African higher education has colonial Eurocentric linkages. This is clear in the knowledge and discourse formalised on university campuses that is aimed at advancing the coloniality of power matrices of racism, destruction of indigenous knowledges, cultures, languages, identities and histories (Ngugi, 1986; 1997). It has been observed that student development was designed to promote and impose a world view that is alien to African contexts and its theoretical frames have subalternised African ways of knowing. More importantly, the section has noted that epistemic colonisation embedded in the theories and ideologies of the discipline must be unearthed to enable the development of a poly-epistemic Afro-centred framework. To enable decoloniality and achieve a holistic and transformative student leadership development model there is need to embrace inter-epistemic dialogue with the Eurocentric theories.

The chapter has also argued that epistemic decoloniality struggles in higher education co-curriculum must be broad and inclusive for all those involved in student development, its knowledge generation and its practice i.e. student development practitioners, theorists, students and partners in order for it to grow in strength. The researcher encourages continuous engagement with both decolonial and indigenous knowledge theorists such as Nabudere (2007), Mapara (2009), Odora-Hoppers (2009), Mbembe (2015), Mamdani (2016), Mungwini (2017) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) to mention just a few, would give it intellectual nourishment and flair for its perpetual growth.

The theoretical framework has revealed that SD is a field that is in need of decolonisation due to the lack of non- Eurocentric ways of knowing and understanding that guide its practice in universities and colleges. The way SD is practised in Zimbabwean higher education results in critics viewing the university as a site where African indigenous epistemologies struggle to find space and recognition.

Hence, the call for decolonisation of SD is legitimate as this would create spaces for the mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and policies. The section on the decolonial critique in this chapter, shows that SD faces the critique of having been developed out of a Eurocentric middle-class tradition and this tradition continues to guide and inform SD practice more than four decades after winning the struggle for self-determination. Literature on reforming institutional cultures in universities has not focussed on incorporation of African indigenous into SD programming. Therefore, decoloniality for SD is crucial so as to confront its

Eurocentric roots thereby delink it from the prevailing perception where it is seen as promoting coloniality. From this decolonial approach a new, relevant and transformative SD praxis can emerge.

In the next chapter the researcher presents a synopsis of the methods which were used to operationalise this research.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides optics on, and explains the design that anchors this research and presents the qualitative strategy as informing this study. The first section delineates the researcher's background, beliefs and biases as well as the research methodologies, design and the instruments that were used to collect data. The second section explains the strategies that underpin the research and further presents the qualitative paradigm that was used and the philosophical assumptions that influenced the research design. The research setting and context of the universities under study and the eighteen (18) participants who consented to be interviewed and the data collection methods are presented. A discussion on the research process that involves data coding and analysis follows.

This research is an exploration into the possibility of decolonising SD in higher education through the incorporation of indigenous epistemologies and policies. The researcher hopes that the study would make a significant contribution to the recognition of the importance of mainstreaming indigenous knowledges and policies in SD. The findings reveal an urgent need for the inclusion of indigenous knowledges into SD programmes to stem the epistemicides, culturecides, linguicides and identicides perpetuated by coloniality.

#### **4.2 The Researcher's Background, Biases and Beliefs**

Cresswell (2009, 2012) opines that all research is interpretive thus it is appropriate for the researcher to be self-reflective and patently state his/her background, biases and beliefs and indicate how they impact the study. This study stems from four levels of personal experiences of the researcher, which are my experiences as an undergraduate student at the University of Zimbabwe from 1988-1990, then as a high school teacher from 1991-2011, thirdly as Director for Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes at Chinhoyi University of Technology from 2011-2019 and as the Dean of Students at Bindura University of Science Education from 2020 onwards and fourthly as a researcher in this study. All these experiences triggered the researcher's interest in understanding how SD practice in Zimbabwean universities can undergo decolonisation by incorporating indigenous African epistemologies and policies.

Throughout this project the researcher revolves these experiential positions of being an undergraduate student, teacher, student affairs practitioner and Doctor of Philosophy student and this can be recognised in shifts of voice and instants of reflexivity.

The researcher's disclosure of his/her relationship to the research is of vital importance in order to show transparency to the readers and also to create awareness of his/her possible bias in data collection and analysis (Cresswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lewis, 2015; Schreiber, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) expound that the most important reason for the researcher's self-disclosure about his/her relationship to the research is to establish and confirm him/her as an authority in the context of the study and thus render it credibility.

As an undergraduate student at the University of Zimbabwe from 1988 to 1990, the researcher was exposed to Western life style in terms of food, dress, speech tones, sports and recreation. The campus culture portrayed acquiring the bourgeoisie lifestyle as the main reason why students had come to university. Students who preferred the simple Zimbabwean diet of *sadza* and did not imitate Western speech tones were derisively regarded as SRBs implying that they had a very strong rural background something which was looked down upon. In sports elite disciplines such as cricket, rugby, golf and tennis were prioritised. The academic curriculum was also highly westernised with piecemeal attempts to reform it by including indigenous ways of knowing. Some of our lecturers especially those who had just returned from the Western capitals always buttressed the notion that we were being trained to be the elite in society and students were always reminded that that they were the upcoming bourgeoisie. Students were given financial grants which we termed 'pay-out' and this amount was adequate to support our supposed new Western lifestyles. As the researcher reflects back, he apparently realises that students were in a subtle way being trained to look down upon their traditional African culture and values. It is clear that the out of the lecture room SD activities and the campus culture were Eurocentric and there was little or no effort to include indigenous African ways of knowing and cultural values in life skills development.

As a high school teacher, the researcher taught History and Divinity at Advanced Level ('A' Level). In history students had a choice of taking two papers out of thirteen of which European history had ten papers. African history had three papers and most of the textbooks used were written by European historians. This situation proved that African knowledges were inferiorised.



In Divinity a similar situation prevailed since the syllabus had nothing on African religions. The curriculum was encumbered by the hegemony of Eurocentrism. The situation made the researcher to be more thoughtful about the impact of a curriculum that largely silenced indigenous epistemologies to the students' psyche and identity consciousness. As a post-graduate student at the University of Zimbabwe from 2004 to 2005 the researcher was exposed to the discipline of curriculum analysis and this opened his eyes to the enduring legacy of coloniality in the Zimbabwean education system. The purpose of curriculum analysis is to remove meaninglessness in the curriculum (Mavhunga, 2006). This was an awakening period for the researcher and when he went back to the classroom, he had the opportunity to work with the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in indigenising the History and Divinity syllabi at advanced level. However, at this time the researcher had not yet been introduced to critiques that advocated for the de-Westernisation of the curriculum.

In 2011, the researcher joined Chinhoyi University of Technology as the Director for Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes. Part of the job included designing programmes that helped students acquire leadership and civic skills through student clubs and organisations. The researcher discovered that most of the clubs had links with external organisations and corporates and the programmes were designed to promote Western culture and the interests of neo-liberalism. The popular clubs on campus were Toastmasters, Debate, Rotaract and Leos whose activities were designed to promote the English language and British middle-class culture. These campus clubs were twinned to their promotional mother clubs which were run by prominent corporate leaders in Harare. Students who participated in these clubs were regarded highly by both staff and other students. Such students would easily get places for attachment and employment after graduation because of their links to corporate leaders who considered them well-groomed in their elitist culture. The researcher realised that Western-oriented corporates and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) had immense influence on SD programming in universities in Zimbabwe to the extent that SD practitioners had very little say on most programmes run on their campuses. This inspired the researcher to undertake this study as a way of contributing to ideas that challenge the current Eurocentric conceptualisations of SD.

The researcher undertook this study with the aim of investigating how SD programmes were designed in Zimbabwean universities and to find out whether indigenous epistemologies and policies were included. Further, the researcher was interested in finding out whether Student

Affairs Professionals (SAPs) were being exposed to critiques of Eurocentrism and research questions for the study were designed accordingly to guide the study. The researcher realised that the question whether SD can be decolonised is complex since it has far reaching professional, institutional and political implications. The researcher then realised that while it is feasible to use a decolonial approach to guide SD practice, the larger issue of decolonisation was complex given the epistemic, professional and institutional contestation within most universities in Zimbabwe. This observation made the researcher to question whether SD in Zimbabwean HEIs can ever be decolonised through the mainstreaming of indigenous African epistemologies and policies. To be clearer the researcher asked what it meant to mainstream indigenous epistemologies and what implications decolonisation of SD had. The genealogy of SD is deeply rooted in Eurocentrism bringing to the fore the question whether incorporation of indigenous ways of knowing and values is compatible with its background. Therefore, questions such as; is it possible for SD to be weaned from the Eurocentric colonising agenda would always come to mind. By critically teasing these issues the researcher found it inescapable that SD evolved out of a hegemonic Eurocentric and colonising worldview. Student clubs and societies also evolved in the same ways. The ideology informing SD has been central to its colonising agenda aiding the reproduction and re-invention of Eurocentric epistemology in Zimbabwean higher education.

In conducting this study, the researcher argues that while SD may not be the vehicle for recolonization *per se* careful consideration must be given to whether SD can ever embrace a decolonial discourse such as mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies. Student clubs and societies that present a Eurocentric epistemology of SD can be considered as carriers of a recolonization agenda. SD needs to be separated from its neo-liberal and colonising agenda so as to enhance its compatibility with indigenous epistemologies.

While carrying out this study the researcher had some assumptions of what the study would reveal. One of the assumptions was that the basic process of decolonial criteria for SD i.e., embedding indigenous epistemologies would be implemented by SAPs, but he doubted they had the knowhow to meet the criteria.

This was based on the perception that mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies and decolonisation were not known by the SAPs. The researcher also held the assumption that due to lack of financial support for SD activities, the SAPs would continue to rely on Western-oriented corporates and NGOs for funding. As highlighted above corporates and NGOs dictate

what is taught in SD programmes thus defeating the decolonial agenda. Some corporate initiated SD programmes have the lure of foreign travel with fat cheques as per diem which is a huge attraction to the underpaid SAPs. This implies that the incorporation of indigenous ways of knowing into SD will not get priority.

The researcher narrates this brief introduction of his position as a SAP and a post-graduate student because he cannot separate himself from the research questions that are once again highlighted below. In conducting this research, the researcher had to react to the questions that he asked to the findings that came out and to the challenges that can arise during the implementation of the recommendations that he suggests in the concluding chapter. This research has made him aware how his own experiences as a SAP and as a student can contribute to furthering the goals and understanding the implications of decolonising SD through the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies.

### **4.3 Research Questions**

According to Grosfoguel, (2013); Maldonado-Torres, (2017); Mignolo, (2013); Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2018); Santos, (2014) decoloniality is an onto-epistemic project that is aimed at stemming Eurocentrism that underlies the politics of knowledge in education. They also point out that decoloniality is oriented towards building a pluriversal epistemology based on non-dominative co-existence. Decoloniality is a practical project that necessitates the creation of conditions that are conducive to the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies in SD. Therefore, in order to decolonise SD it is important for SAPs to change how they think about and how they practice SD. Most critically, it is important for universities to create spaces of learning that promote epistemic co-existence between Eurocentric and indigenous African epistemologies. This implies asking questions about the geo-political history of SD as well as the hierarchical structure of knowledge that informs its theories and models.

Whilst there are extensive studies on the need to decolonise higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, there is very little on the need to the need to decolonise SD despite the existence of literature linking SD historically and presently to Eurocentrism and Western colonial agenda (Madambi & Mangena, 2016; Magoqwana, 2018; Ngugi, 1992).

The little research that is there has focussed on the absence of contributions from the non-Western liberal tradition and the lack of inclusion and acceptance of non-Eurocentric epistemologies (Al-Kassimi, 2018; Magoqwana, 2018; Shizha, 2015). However, there is

dearth of studies that examine the practice of SD in Zimbabwean HEI and the extent to which SAPs are implementing decolonial programmes yet literature on the coloniality of SD programmes is prevalent (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). As has highlighted in the literature review SD has been plagued by colonising philosophy from its inception (Ngugi, 1992; 1997). To take into perspective the critique of these decolonial critiques implies advocating for the provision of adequate space in SD practice inter-epistemic dialogue between indigenous epistemologies and Eurocentrism. This points to the need for SAPs to engage in decolonial praxis in their design and implementation of SD. This can be achieved by incorporating indigenous African epistemologies and policies in SD and by exploring SAPs' programmes and activities it can be determined whether and how decolonial praxis is occurring or not.

The research questions this study sought to answer are exploratory and can be categorised as both ontological and epistemological. They are ontological in that they capture SAPs' and student leaders' beliefs about the colonial nature of SD, especially the dominance of Eurocentric views on who was human enough to create knowledge and whose knowledge became dominant (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, 2019). The research questions are epistemological in that they explore phenomenon of SD programmes and the approaches used to implement, particularly the dominance of Eurocentrism and the subalternisation of indigenous epistemologies in SD activities. Grounded theory methodology which was employed in this research requires that the research questions should be intentionally open and generally broad to allow for themes to emerge (Charmaz, 2017; Japhet & Usman, 2013; Lewis, 2015; McCallin, 1999). Thus, the research questions for this study were formulated as follows:

1. Do SAPs in Zimbabwean universities engage in decolonial approaches in student development programming?
2. What are the perceptions of SAPs and SRC leaders on mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing into student development in Zimbabwean higher education?
3. What are the problems faced by SAPs in embedding indigenous epistemologies?
4. What intervention strategies can be adopted to decolonise SD epistemology by embracing African indigenous epistemologies and policies?

To answer these questions SAPs were asked questions about their educational and professional background and their programmes and activities as well as their methodologies. These questions are found on Appendix E. Further, the SRC members who included the Presidents and Secretary-Generals were also asked questions about their perceptions on decolonising SD programmes by incorporating indigenous African ways of knowing and policies. These questions are found on Appendix G.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

Creswell (2009, 2012) observes that the research design is a plan that lays out the processes and procedures for research that span from broad assumptions to detailed strategies of data collection and analysis. This research is grounded in what Schreiber (2014) termed model 2 of knowledge construction. Unlike model 1 which is regarded as traditional and anchored on the pursuit of academic interests only and detached from society, model 2 is grounded in society and its utility value is in its impact on society. This research was conducted to probe multi-dimensional phenomena and was empirical and sought in-depth textured descriptions. Hence the researcher employed a multi-case study design in which in-depth interviews with Student Affairs Practitioners (SAPs) and focus group discussions with Student Representative Council (SRC) members were used to collect, analyse and interpret data. The case sites were three state universities in-here identified as A, B and C. Further, qualitative content analysis of documents was applied to determine how SD is constructed in key student affairs and institutional documents.

To address the research questions, the study employed grounded theory methodology that was informed by the critical enquiry paradigm which made use of document analysis, in-depth interviews with SAPs who included Deans of Students, Directors of Campus and Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes, Counsellors and Wardens as well as focus group discussions with SRC leaders at three state universities in Zimbabwe. The researcher aimed to develop a theory based on a blend of African indigenous *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy and the prevailing Eurocentric models to assist (SAPs) design and implement a decolonial approach in SD programming. Grounded theory is best suited to achieve this objective because of its capacity to explore a process with the objective of developing a model or theory based on observations (Charmaz, 2017). The choice of grounded theory was arrived at after the researcher was satisfied that it fits well with the interpretive nature of this study.

#### 4.4.1 Grounded Theory Research Technique

Grounded theory is extensively used in social sciences research. It has some attraction to a person who uses qualitative approaches as a non-experienced researcher because it provides well sign-posted procedures (Ary, *et al.*, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Japhet and Usman, 2013). The main aspect of grounded theory is seeking to build a theory that is intimately linked to data, so that the resultant theory is likely to be consistent with the empirical data. Therefore, grounded theory is different from other qualitative research methods in that it lays emphasis on theory development (Charmaz, 1997, 2017; Creswell, 2012; Japhet & Usman, 2013). Theory is grounded when it emerges from, and generates explanations of phenomena that reflect the life experiences of the participants that the researcher is studying. Grounded theory also differs from other types of qualitative research in that other qualitative research approaches collect data first before analysing it long after leaving the site. In contrast, grounded theory uses the emerging theoretical categories to shape the data collection while still at the site collection data (Hammarberg, Kirkman & De Lacey, 2016; Japhet & Usman, 2013; Lewis, 2015). Hence, in grounded theory technique data collection and analysis progress simultaneously. This process helps the researcher to attend to issues on how the participants construct their reality from the initial stages. Therefore, grounded theory is particularly suitable to this study that is aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to the mainstreaming of indigenous ways of knowing and policies in SD.

Charmaz (2017) elaborates that grounded theory is a robust research process which is useful in developing context based, process-oriented descriptions and explanations of phenomena. McCallin (1999) explicates that the strength of grounded theory design lies in the fact that a model or theory that emerges is grounded in the data from which it emerged rather than relying on analytical constructs from existing theories. Grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960's requires that the researcher should be connected to the field from which the research would be conducted (Charmaz, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This is significant as it aids the discovery of key attributes that could provide a framework that could be used to develop a model. In line with this observation, the researcher is a Dean of Students and has also been a Director for Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes at two of the universities in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the choice of grounded theory design was quite ideal for this research because the researcher would utilize his personal proximity to the study area as an opportunity for drawing more insights into the study.

Charmaz (2017) posits that Glaser and Strauss's (1967) research utilised the findings from interviews and observations they conducted to develop codes and categories that could be used when gathering data. In support of this view Lewis (2015) contends that this process is truth conveying because the deductions made from the findings not only confirm the validity of the codes and categories but also their application to new data. Grounded theory was initially used in sociology and nursing studies but of late it has increasingly become a popular research method in social sciences (Charmaz, 1997). Basing on the strength of the arguments in support of the use of grounded theory in social sciences the researcher adopted it as the design of this study.

Critics of grounded theory argue that its weakness stems from lack of quantification and its use of inductive reasoning (Ary, *et al.*, 2010; Charmaz, 1997, 2017; Lewis, 2015). However, Charmaz (1997, 2017) defends it posting that the method is systematic and meticulous and has been remodelled from being exclusively objectivist to constructivist. Many social scientists have found the method to be rigorous and methodical. Charmaz (2017) has played a pivotal role in remodelling grounded theory, moving it from being objectivist to constructivist. Constructivist grounded theory retains the robustness of the method and it offers clear guidelines for examining how people construct meaning in the context of the phenomena being studied. In support of this view, Charmaz (2017) expounds that constructivist grounded theory recognises and retains the robustness of the method itself while engaging with the philosophical debate of the past and provides clear strategies for examining how people create meaning within the context of the studied situation. Constructivists study how and why participants construct meaning and actions in specific situations (McCallin, 1999). A constructivist approach means more than observing how persons view their situations. Charmaz (2017) points out that data collection in constructivist grounded theory is a result of a relationship between the researcher and the phenomena being studied, thus allowing the researcher to construct situated knowledge that reflects how corresponding relationships arise in social contexts where their participants are imbedded. Therefore, in conducting this study it was crucial for the researcher to examine the academic, social and cultural context of the participants including their academic background, professional training, and their perspectives on institutional challenges affecting SD in the Zimbabwean higher education terrain.

Cresswell (2009, 2012) opines that constructivist grounded theory research procedures determine the categories of coding and also advances personal values and experiences.

This process dovetailed well with this thesis whose aim was to develop a theory through which indigenous ways of knowing could be embedded into SD

#### **4.5 Qualitative Research Approach**

The researcher employed the qualitative research methods in this study because the techniques provide opportunities for contextualised, inductive and naturalistic interpretations and provide space for the researcher's personal involvement in the study (Ary *et al.*, 2010; Charmaz, 2017; Japhet & Usman, 2013; Lewis, 2015; McCallin, 1999). This is in line with Creswell's (2009) observation that under the qualitative paradigm the researcher is the key instrument for data collection through examination of documents or interviewing participants. Furthermore, the researcher selected the qualitative approach because it is *gestaltic* which implies that it emphasises the totality of experience (Charmaz, 1997, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the qualitative research approach was deemed to be a fitting tool to answer the research questions of this study focussing on the decolonisation of SD programmes by providing space for indigenous epistemologies and policies in its theories, models and practice. Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Kenn (2010) point to the over-representation of quantitative methods in SD and criticised the apparent lack of qualitative approaches.

##### **4.5.1 Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Methods**

The qualitative research approach is most suitable for this research because it recognises the interplay between the researcher and the data and the context. The major advantage of the qualitative approach in this study is that it provided participants the opportunity to make meaning and sense out of their experiences more than what could have been achieved with quantitative methods that are mere descriptions (Bricki and Green, 2007; Creswell, 2012, Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007; Ingleby, 2012). SD in Zimbabwean higher education is an under-researched area hence qualitative research techniques offer a systematic method to data gathering, analysis and interpretation. Decolonising SD through creating spaces for indigenous knowledges is an emerging theme in student affairs management, hence qualitative research offers most appropriate technique since it provides for naturalistic and inductive interpretation.

The researcher concurs with Ingleby (2012) who explicates that research is never value free and is always embedded in a personal and contextual reality. The researcher managed this limitation by implementing various measures which include full disclosure by the researcher



of his dispositions, history, context and relationship to the area of study and the participants. It is important to note that while qualitative research is explicit about the role and impact of subjectivity of the researcher, quantitative research is silent on the subjectivity of the researcher.

#### **4.6 Philosophical assumptions**

The need to comprehend the researcher's philosophical assumptions fortifies the research process since those assumptions have an overarching bearing on the research and its impact (Japhet & Usman, 2013; McCallin, 1999). In the same vein, Cresswell (2009, 2012) identifies four philosophical paradigms within qualitative research namely, ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology and provides the reasons why it is important to articulate these four paradigms. Firstly, they influence the way a researcher looks at problems and guides him/her on the nature of the research questions to be asked and also guide the way in which the researcher attempts to answer the research questions. Researchers embrace different realities and likewise the participants being studied therefore, a researcher carries his study with the intent of reporting these multiple realities. The researcher adopted the philosophical view which considers that knowledge is a social construct and is always under constant review to embrace new ways of knowing and of creating meaning (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016; Lewis, 2015). In line with this ontological perspective the researcher employed grounded theory as the methodology of this study.

Grounded theory research mostly leans itself to the constructivist or critical enquiry approach to ontology basing on the construct that reality is created by people within groups and thus needs to be interpreted in light of the totality of events. Within this spectrum this research focussing on decoloniality of SD will be guided by a critical approach to ontology, one that asks questions on whose reality will be considered in view of how power relations influence reality. As decolonial theorists correctly observe, a large portion of the global community is deliberately left out of the category of being human, by the media, academia and political players (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2015, 2018). Therefore, if other people are cast out of the category of humanity, then not all ontologies are recognised as being in existence and this restriction of ontologies will result in an imposed articulation of what can be considered as reality in qualitative research.

Studies employing grounded theory most often take a critical enquiry paradigm to ontology that affirms that reality cannot be expressed singularly but is created by people within groups.

Hence reality needs to be interpreted in the totality of the environment and its events. With regard to this research, ontology that considers how power relations influence reality is more suitable given the intent of decolonial theory to interrogate coloniality's dominant matrices of power structures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2018). In order to have a reality, the humanity of an individual must be considered first because the concept of humanity used in general conversations, in university seminars and by the media, is a concept that leaves outside humanity a large portion of the global population (Mignolo, 2009; 2013). Therefore, if some portions of the human race are not considered within the category of humanity, it implies that not all ontologies are recognised or even perceived to exist.

Epistemological assumptions relate to the nature of knowledge and how things come to be known, hence in carrying out studies, researchers have to know their participants and their contextual environment from first-hand experience. Epistemology is engrossed in structures of power which *inter-alia* include race, language, class, gender, linguistics and geography (Grosfoguel, 2003, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2016, 2019; Mignolo, 1999, 2013). Non-Eurocentric epistemologies have been 'othered' and excluded from discourse because they originate from de-provincialised spaces, bodies and places (De Lissovoy, 2010; Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Santos, 2014; Suárez-Krabbe, 2010, 2012). Therefore, particular attention should be focussed on ensuring the inclusion of and deliberate emphasis on non-Eurocentric epistemologies in the analysis and discussion of research data. This study recommended for the incorporation of non-European epistemologies into student development in higher education.

Axiological assumptions relate to the researcher's appreciation that there are values and biases that are attached to the data gathered for the study. In carrying out this study the researcher was aware that there is a need for a decolonial approach in student development programmes and therefore value was attached to the call for decoloniality in the area. In the preceding section the researcher explored his own beliefs and biases. From the initial stages of carrying out data collection from interviews with SAPs and focus group discussion with SRC leaders to the analysis of the findings, lack of incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies in SD programmes was held as a deficient and value was attached to the recognition of the need to decolonise SD.

Methodology relates to the procedures used to determine what can be known and how to acquire that knowledge. The methodology of this study was focussed on process rather than

measurement, therefore qualitative instead of quantitative methodology was used. The discussion of the methodology used in this study is provided in the next section.

The study addressed ontological assumptions which were defined as the different perspectives of SAPs and SRC leaders towards the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD. Epistemological assumptions are a major element of this study as the interview and focus group questions directly addressed the question of what counts as SD knowledge and who gets the right to claim which SD knowledge is legitimised. In order to address these questions, the researcher examined the responses of SAPs and SRC leaders as well as analysis of SD documents. Furthermore, this study sought to establish the background of SAPs who included Deans of Students, directors of on/ off campus life and student development programmes, counsellors and wardens to gain an understanding of how and under what circumstances they have developed their knowledge of SD. In addition, the researcher's own values and biases that have shaped this study have been exposed under this section. The biases of the participants were also exposed in the analysis of the interview data. By exposing the methodological assumptions, the researcher also highlighted the research process.

#### **4.7 Research Setting**

Three state universities were selected as sites for data collection, namely A, B and C. Although data collection focussed on the three, the main thrust was on the generalisability of the findings and not necessarily linked to each university. These three universities were selected basically for two reasons namely; they share a similar genealogy and historical background. The historical development of each university is given below. Secondly, their operations of student affairs management support services are similar. Data collected from the three universities were not categorised according to institution and the universities are not compared to each other. The researcher aimed to collect data that would go beyond the immediate context to ensure that the data would not give away a particular institution. Further, the researcher assured the participants that data gathered from them would not be directly linked to their institutions. The institutional background and history given below was obtained from the universities' websites and the researcher's interactions with SAPs at the sites.

##### **4.7.1 University A**

The university was established to address the problem of the shortage of science teachers in Zimbabwe and it started as a college of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). It attained full

university status in the year 2000. Currently the university has a total enrolment of 6500 students in the faculties of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Science Education and Engineering Sciences. The Student Affairs Division is headed by the Dean of Students who reports to the Vice-Chancellor. Some of the services offered include, Campus Life and Student Development Programmes, Off Campus Life, Student Health, Sports and Recreation, Catering Service, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Services and Campus Accommodation Services.

#### **4.7.2 University B**

The university started as a degree programme that was under the UZ and obtained full university status in 2001. Currently, **University B** has 12000 students from seven schools/faculties namely; and two institutes. The Division of Student Affairs (DOSA) is headed by the Dean of Students who reports to the Vice-Chancellor through the Pro-Vice Chancellor in charge of Business Development and Resource Mobilisation. The DOSA has eight sections which cater for student welfare and support which are; Campus Life and Student Development Programmes, Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes, Catering Service, Student Health Service, Sports, Culture and Recreation, Chaplaincy, Counselling and Life Skills and Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation.

#### **4.7.3 University C**

The university was established in 1999 initially as a Degree Programme offered in that specific province under the UZ and became a full-fledged university in 2002. In July, 2007 a University Amendment Act was passed paving the way for the university to be given its present name as it changed to be more reflective of the mandate that it had to carry as per GoZ designation. The university has 15000 students from five faculties/schools and two institutes. The DOSA is headed by the Dean of Students who reports directly to the Vice Chancellor. The scope of services offered at this institution include Student Development, Chaplaincy and Ecumenical Services, Catering Services, HIV and AIDS and Life Skills, Student Residences, Sports and Recreation, Counselling and Advisory Services and Student Health.

### **4.8 Population, Participants and Sampling Techniques**

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, the selection of participants should be suitable for the research questions. Grounded theory provides scope for the use of a sampling

technique called maximum variations sampling that permits the researcher to deliberately select participants which he/she judges to be fitting for the study (Charmaz, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lewis, 2015). Thus, the researcher selected participants from a small sample of people in their context and studied them in depth as recommended by Charmaz (2017). The researcher purposively selected participants according to their position and job functions in the student affairs department. The SAPs participants were selected on the basis of the relevance of their job description to the area under study. Therefore, not all student affairs practitioners (SAPs) were selected. The researcher targeted sections in the student affairs department that were responsible for student development programmes such as campus/ off campus life, counselling, student development and student governance. Eighteen participants were identified and each accepted the invitation to participate in the research.

Participants for this research were drawn from Deans of Students, Directors of Campus Life/ Off Campus Life and Student Development, Wardens and Counsellors the SRC members who included the Presidents and Secretary-Generals in Zimbabwean universities. The research methodology adopted for this study i.e., grounded theory, allows for a sampling technique called maximum variation sampling which permits deliberate and purposive identification of participants (Schreiber, 2012). Strauss and Corbin (1998) in Charmaz (2017) recommend theoretical sampling pointing out that it ensures that only those participants useful to the study are identified. In identifying participants, the researcher targeted departmental heads in Student Affairs who deal with student development, student governance, counselling, orientation programmes and sports. Using maximum variation sampling technique, one Dean of students, one Deputy Dean of students, four Campus /Off Campus and SD Directors, three Wardens, three Counsellors as well as three SRC Presidents and three Secretary-Generals were selected at three state universities in Zimbabwe. The participants were selected as reliable sources of data since the research questions were focussed on getting an understanding of how and why SAPs and SRC leaders engage with embedding African indigenous epistemologies and policies in their SD activities.

In drawing up the list of participants the researcher visited state universities' web sites to determine institutions with similar student affairs structures and programmes. The researcher then identified a criterion for selecting participants who were ideal to the research questions. The study employed purposive sampling also referred to as judgemental sampling techniques. Under this procedure, participants are purposively selected because the researcher views them

as being in a position to provide rich data as they were directly linked to SD programming and implementation.

Due to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19 also known as Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 [SARS-CoV-2]) pandemic which led to the closure of universities not only in Zimbabwe but worldwide, participants who could not be met face to face were contacted through emails and telephone calls to request their participation. Through emails the researcher sent participant consent forms for each participant detailing the advantages and risks of their participation. The participants were requested to consent to be interviewed for 30-40 minutes through Zoom (Appendix C). All interviews were carried out with the agreement that data collected would be strictly confidential and that names of interviewees and their institutions would not be revealed in relation to their responses. A total of eighteen participants were interviewed comprising of twelve SAPs and six SRC leaders as shown in table 1 below. This sample was considered an appropriate sample size because in qualitative studies a sample size ranging from ten to thirty is deemed typical (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2009, 2012). Given the small but growing field of student affairs in Zimbabwean higher education the final sample size was deemed satisfactory. Furthermore, in qualitative research emphasis is placed on richness of data rather than on the quantity of data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Lewis, 2015).

**Table 4:1: Participants of the study according to institution (N=18)**

University	Number of Participants
University A	6
University B	6
University C	6

**Table 4.2: Demographic data of participants (N=18)**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Dean of Students	2 (M=1; F=1)
Director of Campus Life and Student Development Programmes	2 (M=0; F=2)
Director Off Campus Life and Student Development Programmes	2 (M=2; F=0)
Counsellors	3 (M=1; F=2)
Wardens	3 (M=1; F=2)
SRC President	3 (M=3; F=0)
SRC Secretary-General	3 (M=2; F=1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

#### **4.8.1 Educational Qualifications and Experience of SAPs**

At the time of data collection ten of the SAPs had Masters Degrees and two were studying towards attaining Master's Degree. The Deans of Students had a Master of Science degree in Student Affairs while eight SAPs had Master of Education Degrees and one had a Masters' Degree in Counselling. Two of the SAPs had a first degree. In terms of experience one DOS has more than five years on the post and the other had three years. As for Campus and Off Campus Directors, Counsellors, and Wardens all had more than five years' experience.

#### **4.9 Data Collection Methods**

The data for the research were collected from analysis of institutional documents, in-depth interviews with SAPs and focus group discussions with SRC leaders.

### 4.9.1 Document Analysis

Qualitative analysis of documents is a data collection method that helps the researcher to comprehend the intended meaning and significance of documents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Lewis, 2015). This method was applied on universities documents focussing on their references to SD programmes centring on their intended objectives and purpose. This study employed content analysis of documents as a data gathering tool on its own and not for the purposes of triangulation. Key documents that were identified and analysed were availed by Deans of Students while others were downloaded from the universities' websites.

This approach revealed the SD programmes that are carried out at each institution and the SAPs' perceptions on their impact and importance. The focus of document analysis centred on the message being conveyed by the documents and SAPs' perceptions on the impact of the SD programmes on students. The main advantage of documents is that they are helpful in verifying information collected from other sources such as interviews and focus group discussion. Though documents may reflect bias they also have the added advantage that they help the researcher to collect a lot of data quickly and inexpensively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

**Table 4.3: Documents that were used for data collection**

Document Title	Source
Ordinance governing student conduct and discipline	University websites
Policy on Student Development	Dean of Students' office
University Act	Dean of Students' office
End of year Reports	Dean of students' office



#### **4.9.2 Procedure for Document Analysis**

The procedure for analysing the documents involved identifying key words which relate to SD programmes such as clubs, societies, sports, recreation, counselling, orientation, life skills, grooming, etiquette and leadership training. The documents were explored for these key words and frequency tables were produced identifying occurrences of reference and the context of frequency. The findings are discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.10 In-depth interviews with SAPs**

Grounded theory does not prescribe any specific interviewing style but rather suggests qualitative interviewing techniques that encourage open-ended questions and a flexible approach that is participant driven (Charmaz, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Japhet & Usman, 2013). Under this approach the researcher is advised to move from the general to the specific and to engage participants in the interviewing process until redundancy is reached (Creswell, 2012; Japhet & Usman, 2013; Lewis, 2015). The researcher applied in- depth interview format for SAPs to create space for discussion while keeping attention on the emerging themes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Due to the coronavirus crisis seven interviews with SAPs were held using Zoom platform while the other five were held face to face. Two focus group discussions with student leaders were held online through the Zoom platform. The researcher set interview times which were convenient to the participants. Before each interview was carried out the researcher informed each participant the purpose of the study, the ethical issues involved; assured them of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also sought the participants' consent to record the interviews. Prior to the interview the researcher sent a set of the questions to the participants to help them outline the context of the research. The Zoom interviews were scheduled for forty minutes to create space for in-depth questioning in order to exhaust the themes. At the end of the interviews the participants were re-assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

#### **4.11 Focus Group interview for SRC**

A focus group interview format was used to collect data from SRC leaders who included the SRC Presidents and Secretary-Generals. The targeted group consisted of six SRC leaders i.e. two from each institution. The selected participants showed deep knowledge of the information relevant to the topic. The researcher guided the discussion so as to ensure that all issues relevant to the topic were covered. Before delving into the discussion, the researcher introduced some

informal chats on social issues affecting students on campus to enable the participants to settle down and also to create rapport with them.

The main objective of using focus group discussion was to generate views revealing student leaders' beliefs, perceptions and attitudes on incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies into SD in Zimbabwean universities. Focus group interviewing is a form of group interview where participants interact with each other and it has the advantage that it allows the views of the participants to emerge (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Data emerges from the interaction of the participants.

The focus group discussions were held through the Zoom platform and they consisted of six student leaders who comprised three Presidents and three Secretary-Generals. The group had homogeneous characteristics so as to encourage free participation as recommended by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007). The main advantage of a focus group discussion is that it enables the researcher to gather huge data from multiple participants at the same time (Creswell, 2009, 2012; Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the technique was found to be time saving and inexpensive to the researcher.

During the discussion the researcher ensured that rules regulating focus group discussions were observed. These included ensuring that every participant had been afforded a chance to speak, ensuring the confidentiality and protection of participants and that all participants' contributions were considered as vital data. The researcher facilitated the smooth flow of the discussion by introducing the topic and guiding the proceedings to make sure that the discussion remained relevant and on track without antagonising participants dominating the discussion.

#### **4.12 Procedure and Data Processing**

The researcher conducted five face to face interviews and seven interviews using the Zoom platform with SAPs and one focus group discussion with SRC leaders. Interview lengths stretched from thirty–forty minutes depending on the quantity of information the participants had to share. The interviews were structured into four categories. The first category was designed to collect data on the participants' demographic information such as gender, education and experience. The second category aimed information on the core functions of SD, the theories and models used as well as SAPs' views on the need to decolonise it. The third category looked at ministerial and institutional policies on SD as well as the external

stakeholders who partnered student affairs departments in SD. The last category of the questions focussed on institutional culture and how it can be decolonised as well as challenges that SD practitioners faced in their attempts to embed indigenous ways of knowing and policies in their design and implementation of SD programmes. Each interview was audio or video recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Each began with a set of questions on the educational and professional background of the SAPs, the description of the SD programmes offered at the institution and their views on decolonising SD programmes.

The researcher also requested participants to share with him documents relating to SD at their institution some of which were gleaned from the institution's website. During interviews the researcher wrote notes on ideas and themes that emerged from the conversations. These field notes proved to be quite helpful to the coding process and provided depth to the transcribed interviews. The interviews ended with questions on the epistemology of SAPs, the practice of SD, the source of SD knowledge, power relations and hierarchies of SD knowledge. Each of the questions was designed to enlist rich data from SAPs and the SRC student leaders. The researcher transcribed each interview using axial and open coding. Axial coding was used to generate abstract themes and it was the first step in grouping raw data into meaningful categories which were later given dimension. Charmaz (2017) opines that axial coding is used to link categories according to their levels and properties and foregrounds the conditions which underpin certain phenomena. The research questions for this study were designed to gain an understanding of SAPs and SRC leaders' support for the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD and their use of decolonial approach.

Through analysing the academic works of some African indigenous knowledge systems and other decolonial theorists, the researcher developed the key criteria for the mainstreaming of indigenous ways of knowing into SD (De Lissovoy, 2010; Magoqwana, 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2017, 2019; Mapara, 2009, 2017; Mavhunga, 2006; Mignolo, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Santos, 2014; Ngugi, 1997). These key criteria can be used to interrogate SD praxis and this involves the sources of knowledge that inform the design and development of SD programmes in Zimbabwean universities. This approach helped the researcher to determine whether decolonial and practices inclusive of African indigenous epistemologies were being used or not by SD practitioners.

Several decolonial theorists have articulated the criteria for decolonisation by elaborating the tenets of decolonial theory. Friere, (2005); Grosfoguel (2003, 2013); Mampane, Omidire and

Aluko (2018); Mignolo 2009) have elaborated on the need to recognise the absence of indigenous epistemologies. These scholars have emphasised the need to engage epistemologies of indigenous peoples that have been subalternised by Eurocentrism. Failure to engage these epistemologies promotes the continuation of valuecides, epistemicides, identicides and culturecides caused by Eurocentric SD epistemology in Zimbabwean higher education.

It is important to tease issues on which social identities are afforded a voice and authority in SD to the disadvantage of epistemologies of indigenous Zimbabwean people. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, 2020) reiterates the need for a critical interrogation of the geo-politics of those in authority and also those who are excluded from having authority. Therefore, there is a critical need for SAPs to avoid exclusive dependence on hegemonic Eurocentric ways of knowing to provide space for mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD. Grosfoguel argues that hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies require tempering with through the inclusion of epistemologies that originate from the indigenous peoples' ways of knowing.

Freire and Shor (1987) and Friere (2005) articulate clearly on how to engage a decolonising methodology in education. Smith (2019) developed a criterion for decolonising social work that is quite relevant and applicable to mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing in SD. They both asked two important questions, relating to the source of knowledge and beliefs of educators and social workers that guide them in the practice of their work. Further, they also asked questions bordering on who benefits from the current conceptualisations of education. This clearly shows their concerns with the current geo-political origins of knowledge and beliefs which guide education. Their theoretical frame emanates from the decolonial belief that ideas about education that fail to take into account the epistemicides, identicides and culturecides that have persisted in the post-colonial era may never accurately represent the interests of the indigenous non-white people. Hence in the pursuit of embedding indigenous epistemologies into higher education co-curriculum, SAPs need to recognise the absence of indigenous ways of knowing in SD.

SD development design and implementation needs to adopt a critical decolonising consciousness that empowers students with theoretical and analytical tools for individual and social transformation. This can be achieved through the awakening of the learner's critical consciousness to the presence of coloniality in current SD knowledge and praxis. This study focussed on a decolonising approach that critiques SD's collusion with neo-colonial domination that results in linguicides, valuecides and identicides. A decolonial perspective

requires that knowledge as a concept be extended beyond the Eurocentric canon to embed and amplify subalternised indigenous knowledges from the global South. Epistemological diversity requires that serious dialogue takes place between Eurocentrism and epistemologies from the Global South that results in the creation of a pluriversal epistemology (Grosfoguel, 2003, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2016, 2017, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, 2020).

The decolonial criteria proffered by these decolonial theorists can be employed to determine whether practices that incorporate indigenous epistemologies and policies are being applied by SAPs in the design and implementation of SD programmes. The following paradigm for decolonisation and inclusion of indigenous epistemologies were applied as coding categories for the analysis of interview and focus group data as recommended by Aldawood (2018),

- i) Recognition of the absence of and the need to engage with African indigenous epistemologies and policies so as to avoid approaches that lead to epistemicides, culturecides, linguicides and identicides. At operationalisation level: The discussion topic should include the pluriversal epistemology of SD programmes, absence of African indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD narratives and the hierarchical categorisation of knowledge, language and culture in SD theories and models.
- ii) Consideration of social and cultural identities that are regarded as authoritative and why. At operationalisation level: SD programmes to include critiques of power relations and their impact on students.
- iii) Avoiding depending solely on Eurocentric theories, models and languages in SD practice. At operationalisation level: SAPs should not prioritise Eurocentric theories, models and languages and should critique their coloniality.
- iv) Prioritisation of African indigenous theories and policies such as *ubuntu* in SD. At operationalisation level: Ubuntu theories and other cultural materials by Zimbabwean, African and other theorists from the Global South to be included.

The researcher colour-coded each of the coding categories, highlighted and extracted sections of the interviews that corresponded to each of the colour-coded categories. The researcher highlighted those parts of the interviews that demonstrated incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies into SD programmes. The researcher further coded sections of the interviews according to the operationalised sub-categories. After the coding, the researcher analysed and interpreted the data to identify the extent to which decolonial and inclusion of subaltern

epistemologies measures which included the embedding of African indigenous knowledges and policies in SD programmes are implemented.

As part of the research process the researcher also conducted document analysis of student affairs documents on SD programmes that were provided by Deans of Students some of which were downloaded from the universities' web sites. In undertaking document analysis, the researcher took into consideration the themes and main ideas of the text as well as the content information. document analysis is an approach of empirical and methodological analysis of text within the context of their communication (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016; Cresswell, 2009, 2012; Lewis, 2015). Through using a deductive category application, the researcher used the same categories that were used to analyse interviews in the analysis of documents. Reports on SD were analysed according to the coding categories and the emerging data were used in combination with data from the interviews. The operationalised decolonial measures were applied to categorise the content of the documents. Specifically, four components of each document were analysed namely, the description of the programme, aims and objectives of the programme, materials required and the list of the activities covered.

An analysis of these components of the SD programmes was helpful in determining the extent and use of African indigenous epistemologies and decolonial approaches in SD. The operationalised decolonial criteria used to analyse student affairs documents on SD are outlined below;

- i) Recognition of absence and the need to engage African indigenous and other non-Western epistemologies in order to avoid approaches that lead to epistemicides, culturecides and identicides. The discussion topic should include the pluriversal epistemology of SD programmes, absence of African indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD narratives and the hierarchical categorisation of knowledge, language and culture in SD theories and models.
- ii) Consideration of social and cultural identities that are regarded as authoritative and why. At operationalisation level: SD programmes to include critiques of power relations and their impact on students.
- iii) Avoiding relying solely on Eurocentric theories, models and languages in SD practice. At operationalisation level: SAPs should not prioritise Eurocentric theories, models and languages and should critique their coloniality.

- iv) Prioritisation of African indigenous theories and policies such as *ubuntu* in SD. At operationalisation level: *Ubuntu* theories and other materials by Zimbabwean, African and other theorists from the Global South to be included.

As key concepts within decolonial theory, the operationalised criteria applied act as important codes that helped the researcher to establish themes. These themes were merged with those generated by the NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. However, the researcher remained open to the development of additional codes throughout the analysis in line with Japhet and Usman's (2013) recommendation. From the codes data were categorised into themes and the interpretation of those themes is explored in chapter five below.

### **4.13 Ethical Considerations**

This study relied more on qualitative interviews with participants; therefore ethical issues arising from this type of research required that the researcher put concerted effort to conduct the research and interviews with great thoughtfulness and sensitivity to gaining access to and acceptance at the site, informed consent as well as privacy and confidentiality of participants. The researcher requested for and was granted written permission to gain access to and acceptance at the research sites (Appendix D). Further, the researcher employed the informed consent and voluntary participation strategy (Appendix C). Participants were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and protection by ensuring that their identities were not revealed. The researcher used codes to identify participants and not their actual names as recommended by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) and Creswell & Creswell (2018). To promote honest and frank response, participants were assured of the following;

#### **4.13.1 Informed and voluntary participation**

The researcher informed participants of the aims and potential outcomes of the study after which they were informed that they had the right to accept or refuse to participate in the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ingleby, 2012; Lewis, 2015) as evidenced by Appendix C. After being informed that they were participating in the research on a free and voluntary basis, the participants were further informed that they were free to withdraw at any stage of the interview with impunity. The researcher also requested for permission to record the interviews and each participant was assured that the recorded data would be coded such that it was impossible to be directly linked to them. Therefore, references to institutions, departments or

names were removed entirely in the analysis and discussion of findings in order to ensure that the participants did not feel exposed or identified in any way.

Though the participants were informed of the issue of voluntary participation, this was a particularly sensitive issue as the researcher was closely associated with some of the participants through direct line supervision at work. However, the use of Zoom for interviews is likely to have afforded such participants the opportunity to avoid face to face interviewing thus help solving this boundary line issue.

#### **4.13.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The researcher assured participants of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality by using codes and not the actual names of the participants or any other means of personal identification (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016; Ingleby, 2012; Lewis, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Anonymity was also assured in written form to the participants prior to holding the interviews. Grounded theory methodology depends more on content generated from interviews and not on the person who provides the data (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, anonymity can undoubtedly be assured to the participants without compromising on the themes derived from the interviews. Further, to enhance anonymity and confidentiality transcriptions of the interview data were only accessible to the researcher and only him could tell the key that linked the sources of the data.

The aim of this research was not to compare institutions but to extract themes which might go beyond the participants and their contexts. Therefore, institutions are rarely mentioned by name in this study except of cases where such references contribute significantly in adding value to the interpretation of data. Through this process the researcher enhanced participant anonymity and confidentiality.

#### **4.13.3 Protection**

Owing to the fact that the context in which the research was conducted is embedded into the terrain in which the participants work, the researcher assured them that they would be protected and not exposed to humiliation or being judged if they exposed potentially sensitive material about themselves, their work mates or the institution. Thus, non-maleficence is a key ethical principle that the researcher strictly adhered to throughout the entire data gathering process of this study.



#### 4.14 Limitations of the Study

The main limitations of this research primarily centred on challenges of disparity between rhetoric and practice. Rhetoric refers to what was presented during the interviews as what they do and the assumptions or beliefs that guide their work (Cohen, Manon & Morrison, 2007).

Practice is what actually people do, how they act within the context of their beliefs and constructs. This dichotomy is particularly evident in areas where there might be a discrepancy between policy and practice. For example, policy documents that were analysed at all the three institutions that were studied indicated that they focussed on producing graduates endowed with *hunhu/ubuntu* values but possibly in practice no such values were being implemented.

The second limitation borders on the risk of participants giving socially acceptable responses to please or even deceive the researcher, and this distorts the results of the study (Ingleby, 2012). Qualitative data gathering techniques and self-report are burdened by this, and the researcher needs to take into account the possibility that responses deemed to be correct will be provided by participants rather than truthful information. Another limitation of this study concerns the constraints inherent in qualitative research techniques. Interviewing, interpreting and sampling involve subjectivity and biases of the researcher (Creswell, 2009; Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016; Ingleby, 2012). Though the researcher provided full disclosure in this study, the research is always a product of his own reiterations and interpretations although he endeavoured to distil subjectivity from the empirical context he was researching.

The limited sample pool was another concern for this study as it was restricted to Deans of students, Directors of On and Off Campus and SD, Counsellors, and Wardens as well as the SRC Presidents and Secretary-Generals at the three universities selected as research sites. Therefore, just as in most qualitative researches, a small sample size is a limitation to the generalisability of the findings. However, in this study, this limitation was of less significance since the aim was to explore insights so as to generate recommendations.

Another limitation of this study concerns the concept SD which mean several and different things to different people. Thus, the need for a definition of the scope and function, parameters and theoretical underpinnings that relate to this study. The absence thereof presented a limitation to the data gathering and interpretation processes in this study.

Another area that needs mention which might have served both as a limitation and strength was the researcher's closeness to the participants some of whom he has worked or currently

working with. As an advantage this closeness might have increased the trust of the participants and thus enable honest discussions during the interviews. On the other, that closeness to some of the participants may have made them cautious in terms of disclosure. Therefore, it is possible that despite the researcher's assurances of an impartial process, the mere presence of the researcher as the interviewer may have had influenced the process.

#### **4.15 Chapter summary**

In an effort to enhance the validity of this study, the researcher provided a section in this chapter where he explored his background, beliefs and biases as well as the philosophical paradigm that informed this research in an effort to reveal their impact on the research (Cresswell, 2009; Lewis, 2015). The researcher further enhanced its validity through the triangulation of data collected from SAPs, SRC leaders and content analysis of documents. This process ensured that the analysis and interpretation of data was accurate and credible (Japhet & Usman, 2013; Cresswell, 2009, 2012; Lewis, 2015). Although some qualitative researchers downplay the significance of reliability in qualitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) the researcher strived to ensure the dependability of the research by carefully recording and transcribing each interview. The researcher also constantly revisited the data to determine whether the code remained applicable and the same process of revisiting the coded data was applied to the emerging themes to guarantee consistency. Themes emanating from the coded data were complimented with themes that were generated by the NVIVO data analysis software.

In the following chapter, the researcher presents the findings as they relate to decolonial criteria focussing on SD activities carried out by SAPs in the implementation of SD programmes.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses data that were gathered through in-depth interviews with SAPs, focus group discussions with student leaders and content analysis of documents within the context of the research questions. Emerging themes were coded during the process of data collection and these were complimented by the themes that were produced by NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. For the coded themes researcher used quotes to provide a qualitative perspective of the responses and word cloud as well as word trees were used to provide a vivid qualitative perspective of the responses. Before presenting the findings, the researcher will first provide a recast of the scope on which the key research questions were framed. Further, the participants will be re-introduced and finally a discussion on the main themes emerging from interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis.

### **5.2 A recast of the participants**

As outlined in the preceding chapter, eighteen participants took part in this research comprising of twelve SAPs and six student leaders drawn from three state universities in Zimbabwe. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with SAPs, focus group discussions with members of the Student Representative Council and through document analysis. Four male and eight female SAPs were interviewed. Five males and one female SRC members participated in the focus group discussions. The SAPs consisted of one Dean of Students, one Deputy Dean of Students, three Counsellors, four Directors of On and Off Campus and Student Development, three Wardens. Eight of the SAPs had an educational background of being high school teachers while two had been college lecturers and the other two had been nurses.

The main research questions were designed within the context of the following focus areas;

- i) The scope and function of SD in higher education
- ii) Epistemology informing SD theories and models
- iii) The use of decolonial strategies in SD programming
- iv) Inclusion of indigenous African epistemologies in SD programmes

The core research question underpinning the research was: How can indigenous African epistemologies and policies be embedded into SD in higher education? This was followed by the sub-questions below.

1. Do Student Affairs Practitioners (SAPs) in Zimbabwean universities engage in decolonial approaches in student development programmes?
2. What are the perceptions of SAPs and Student Representative Council (SRC) on mainstreaming indigenous ways of knowing into student development in Zimbabwean higher education?
3. What are the problems faced by SAPs in embedding indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD in Zimbabwean higher education?
4. What intervention strategies can be adopted to decolonise SD epistemology by embracing African indigenous epistemologies and policies?

Guided by the above research questions, the following themes emerged from the data gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis:

- i) SAPs' education and training is rooted in Eurocentrism;
- ii) European mode of curriculum is dominating in higher education in Zimbabwe;
- iii) Institutional cultures in universities are elitist and Eurocentric;
- iv) Language of instruction is English and indigenous languages are denigrated;
- v) Eurocentrism is dominant in most student clubs and societies;
- vi) Only Western theories and models used in SD;
- vii) Students are psyched to shun their African culture and identity; and,
- viii) Challenges faced by the SAPs in student development practice.

The researcher employed qualitative data analysis strategies in which data is presented and analysed concurrently using thematic data analysis (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This was complimented by themes that emerged from application of NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. Therefore, the themes highlighted above were analysed within the context of the decolonial criteria as conceptualised by Aldawood (2018). The main tenets are presented below:

- i) Recognition of the absence of and the need to engage with African indigenous epistemologies and policies so as to avoid approaches that lead to epistemicides, culturecides, linguicides and identicides. In operationalizing tenet, the researcher noted the need to include pluriversal epistemology in the discussion of SD programmes, absence of African indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD narratives and the hierarchical categorisation of knowledge, language and culture in SD theory.
- ii) Consideration of social and cultural identities that are regarded as authoritative and why. It was noted that SD programmes should include critiques of power relations and their impact on students.
- iii) Avoiding depending solely on Eurocentric theories, models and languages in SD practice SAPs should not prioritise Eurocentric theories, models and languages and should critique the coloniality embedded in them.
- iv) Prioritisation of African indigenous theories and policies such as *ubuntu* in SD. Ubuntu theories and other cultural materials by Zimbabwean, African and other theorists from the Global South to be included.

### 5.3 Presentation of Findings

In terms of experience, three had experience ranging from one year to three years, and four of them had six to ten years, five had eleven years and above as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 5.1: Experience of Student Affairs Practitioners**

Experience in Student Affairs Management	Number of Student Affairs Practitioners N=12
1-5 years	3
6-10 years	4
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	2

Asked on what motivated them to become SAPs, all of them pointed out that their professional background which exposed them to interfacing with young learners inspired them to take a more active role in developing young adults into responsible future leaders and citizens.

Participant A elaborated that:

My background is tertiary education inspired me, I was a lecturer focussing on imparting life skills on students, so when an opportunity arose for me to join the University, I grabbed it because I wanted to work with young adults who are the future leaders, to develop leadership skills and values in them.

This was supported by Participant C who had a different professional background but the motivational factor was almost the same. Participated explained that:

I am from a nursing background and my first deployment was at a college and we were offering multi-purpose services such as counselling, health education and treatment to young adults. So, when a vacancy arose at this university, I jumped to join university because I wanted to provide guidance and academic advisory services to students who have the potential to be national leaders in future.

Participant E also elucidated that:

My interest to be an SAP was spurred by my professional training as a teacher where I developed great interest developing young minds into responsible adults. I have seen that organisations and communities fail because of lack or poor leadership, therefore when the opportunity of working with young adults presented itself, I took so as to fulfil my desire

The reasons proffered by these SAPs were also echoed by the other nine participants and they showed that though they did not train as Student development practitioners they were aware of the scope and purpose of student development practice. Their understanding of the role of SD in equipping young adults with leadership and other life skills is in sync with the conceptual role and function of the practice as highlighted in Chapter 2.

A word cloud of the respondents' verbatim responses on what motivated them to become SAPs was extracted. The top three themes that emerged were young, adults and background. All the twelve SAPs expressed that they had interest in working with young adults and that this was spurred by their educational as well as professional background. Three of them had trained as college lecturers, seven as teachers and two as nurses. This background exposed them to an environment where they had a crucial role in equipping learner with life skills including leadership.



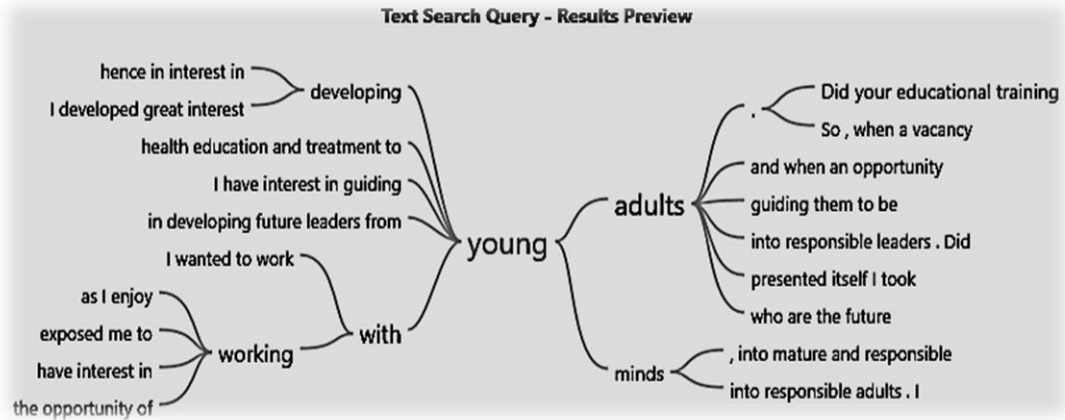
**Fig.5.1: word cloud on SAPs motivation**

This view was echoed by nine SAPs and the word “young” emerged as the top theme, which was mentioned by nine SAPs for ten times and the word “adults” was also mentioned by nine respondents for nine times, and emerged as the second most discussed theme.

A word tree, which showed what the respondents actually said in relation to the word “young”, was also extracted. Participant A outlined that:

I wanted to work with young adults who are the future leaders, to develop their leadership skills.

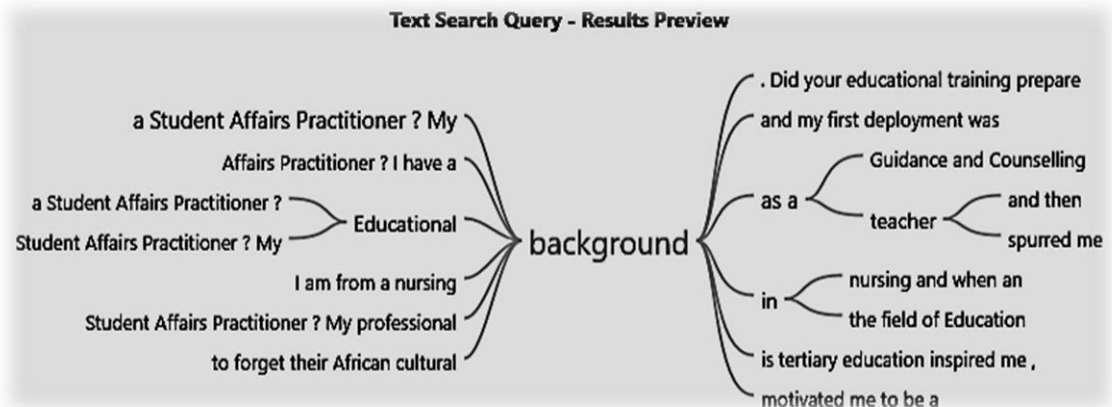
This sentiment was also expressed by eight Participant C summed up the position expressing that: “I have an interest in guiding young adults into responsible leaders”. Seven other participants expressed the same reason as the driving zeal that motivated to be Student Affairs practitioners.



**Fig. 5.2 Word tree on SAPs motivation**

The word “background” emerged as the third most discussed word by the SAPs. It was mentioned by eight SAPs for nine times. Student Affairs Practitioners revealed that professional background as teachers and lecturers was also a major motivating factor which influenced their decision to become SAPs. Participant G for example was very clear that her professional background motivated her to be an SAP saying:

My professional background as a teacher, then college lecturer exposed me to working with students in sports and clubs and this spurred me to be more involved in moulding into responsible community members as leaders and citizens.



**Fig. 5.3: Word tree on SAPs' professional background**

During the interviews, the researcher asked the SAPs questions about their professional training and preparation as student development practitioners so as to gauge their understanding of student development practice and keenness to implement decolonial practices in SD. Their



responses are listed below so as to provide a robust understanding of their conceptualisation of inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD.

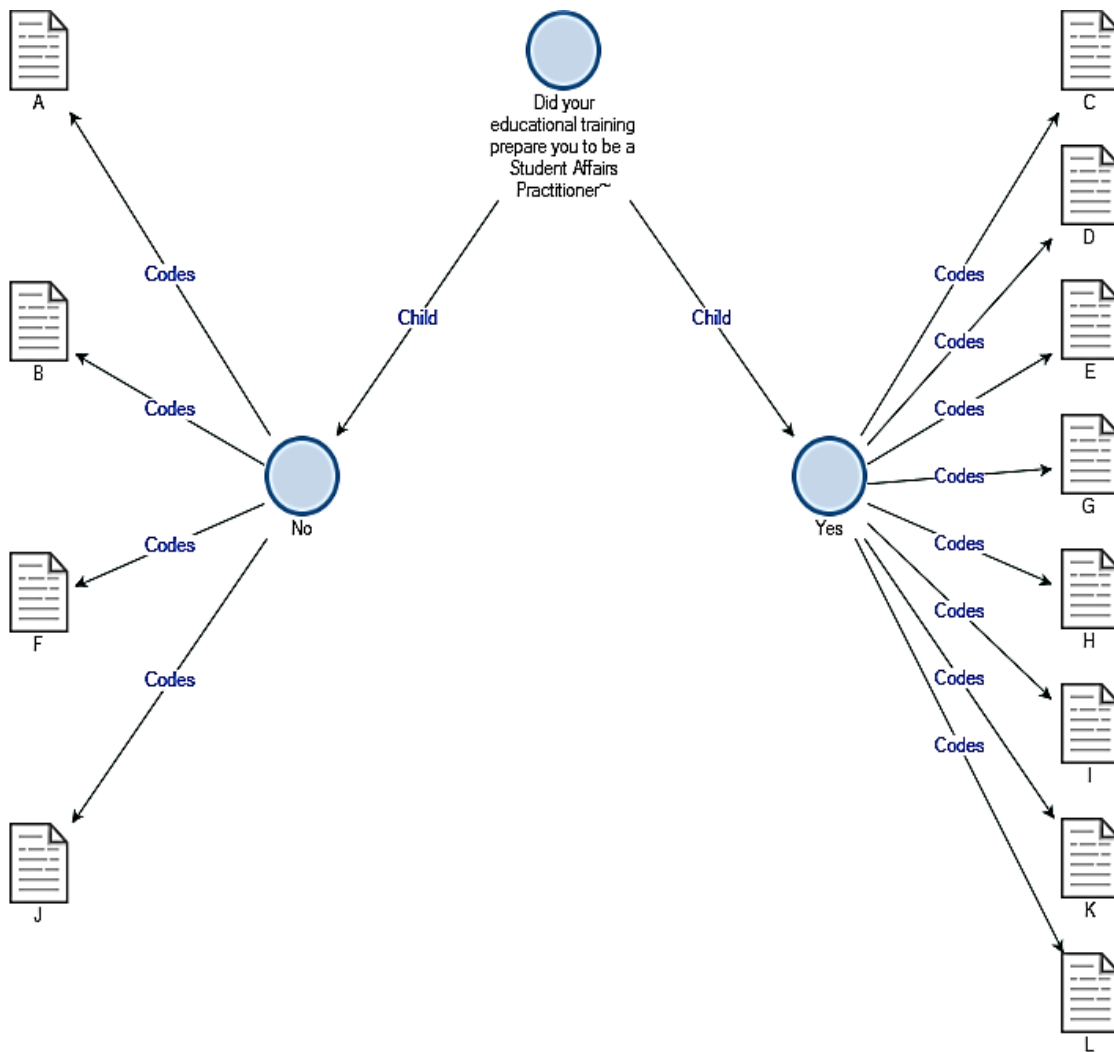
The SAPs responses were coded under the “Yes” or “No” codes. The respondents whose responses were affirmative to the above questions were coded under the yes code, whilst those whose responses were negative were coded under the no code. A comparative diagram was subsequently extracted to pictorially show the number of respondents under each code. Each ‘child’ arrow leads to the codes that were developed from the SAPs responses, which in this case are yes or no. The diagram shows that the majority of the SAPs i.e. eight out of twelve agreed that their educational training prepared them to be in their current profession. However, only a few i.e., four out of twelve did not believe that their educational training background prepared them to be SAPs.

Participant F explained that though her educational and professional training did not prepare her for a role in student development she had zeal to impart *ubuntu* values into university student after realising that there was a gap in this regard. She said:

I started to work in the University environment as a Security guard, observed students had no respect nor friendly relations with the campus security personnel. Further, I noticed that most students were lacking in ‘hunhu/ubuntu’ values so when opportunity to be a warden arose I took it up since I wanted to help instil Ubuntu values in students. Years later, I then joined the Student Affairs Department as a fulltime Student Affairs Practitioner.

Participant J also had trained as nurse; however, she indicated that this was not a disadvantage to her as she has grasped the main tenets of SD through experience. She noted that:

“No, I trained as a nurse but with experience I am now fully versed with student affairs practice”.



**Fig. 5.4: SAPs’ professional training**

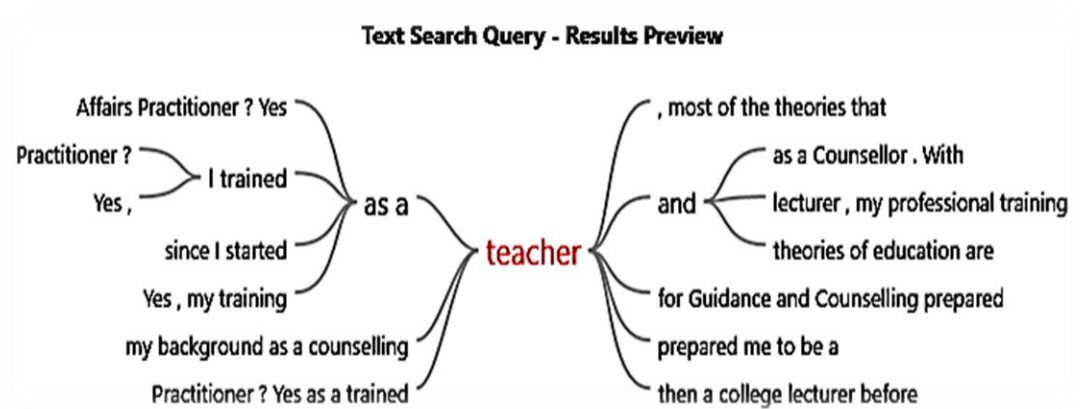
A word cloud of the verbatim responses of the SAPs who agreed that their educational background prepared them to be in their current professions was extracted. Three major themes emerged, which included teacher, yes and prepared. SAPs who had experience in the teaching field and as lecturers in colleges were confident that their training background had prepared to be SAPs. Those who trained as teachers or lecturers explained this was advantageous to them because the theories of education and those of SD are similar. Participant H summed up this position thus:

“Yes, as a trained teacher, most of the theories that we used in education are relevant and almost the same with those SD”.



**Fig. 5.5: Word cloud of whether SAPs' professional training**

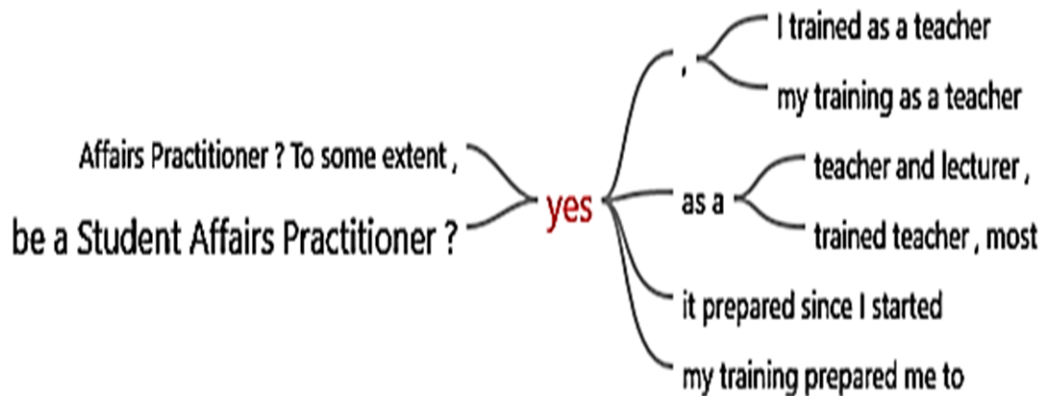
The word “teacher” was mentioned by seven SAPs for seven times, thereby emerging as the most discussed word. A word tree of what was said by the SAPs in relation to the word “teacher” was subsequently extracted. SAPs who trained as teachers explained that the theories of learning and instruction, they learnt at teachers’ training colleges were similar to the theories of SD.



**Fig. 5.6: Word tree of SAPs who trained as teachers.**

The second most discussed theme by the SAPs was the word “yes”, which was mentioned by six people for six times. A word tree showing how the word yes was used by the respondents was also extracted.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Fig. 5.7: Word tree of the effect SAPs’ teaching background**

The word “prepared” emerged as the third most discussed theme by the SAPs. It was mentioned by four SAPs for four times. A word tree output diagram below depicts how the word was used in the SAPs verbatim responses.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



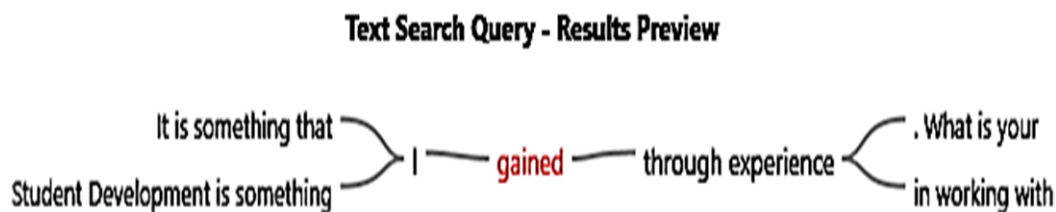
**Fig. 5.8: Word tree of SAPs’ verbatim responses**

A word cloud of the four SAPs who believed that their teaching background prepared them to be in their current professions was also extracted. Two main themes emerged, which included the words gained and working. This shows that while some SAPs believed that SD training was important for successful programming, the majority of SAPs indicated that they came to know more on SD through experience while on the job as illustrated in the diagram below.



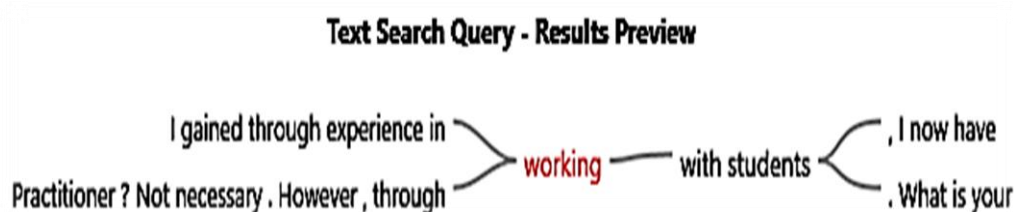
**Fig. 5.9: Word cloud of impact of SAPs’ experience.**

The word gained was mentioned by two SAPs for two times. Below is the word tree output diagram showing how the word was actually used in their responses.



**Fig.5.10: Word tree on SAPs gained SD knowledge through experience**

The word working was also mentioned by 2 SAPs for 2 times. The word tree output diagram below shows how the word was used in their verbatim responses.



**Fig. 5.11: Word tree of SAPs’ SD experience with students**

Out of the twelve SAPs only one had a post-graduate qualification in student affairs management. Although the majority of the SAPs did not have training in student development, they indicated that their teaching background helped them adjust quickly to the demands of SD practice because most of the theories of SD were adapted from the theories of learning and child development which they had been exposed to in their training as educators. Two of the SAPs who

had a nursing background explicitly indicated that they did not have background training in SD. However, they pointed out that they did not consider their lack of training in SD as a handicap to their practice. This is mainly because they felt that imparting life skills is different from imparting academic knowledge because SD skills are experiential.

For SAPs who had an educational background as teachers, their training correlates to how they designed SD programmes. Their design of SD programmes included themes on leadership, grooming, etiquette, team building, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and communication among other employability skills demanded by employers. Though they acknowledged the need to decolonise SD practice, they seemed to be satisfied by their current practice indicating that they imparted skills that were demanded by employers even though such practices were saddled by Eurocentric hegemony.

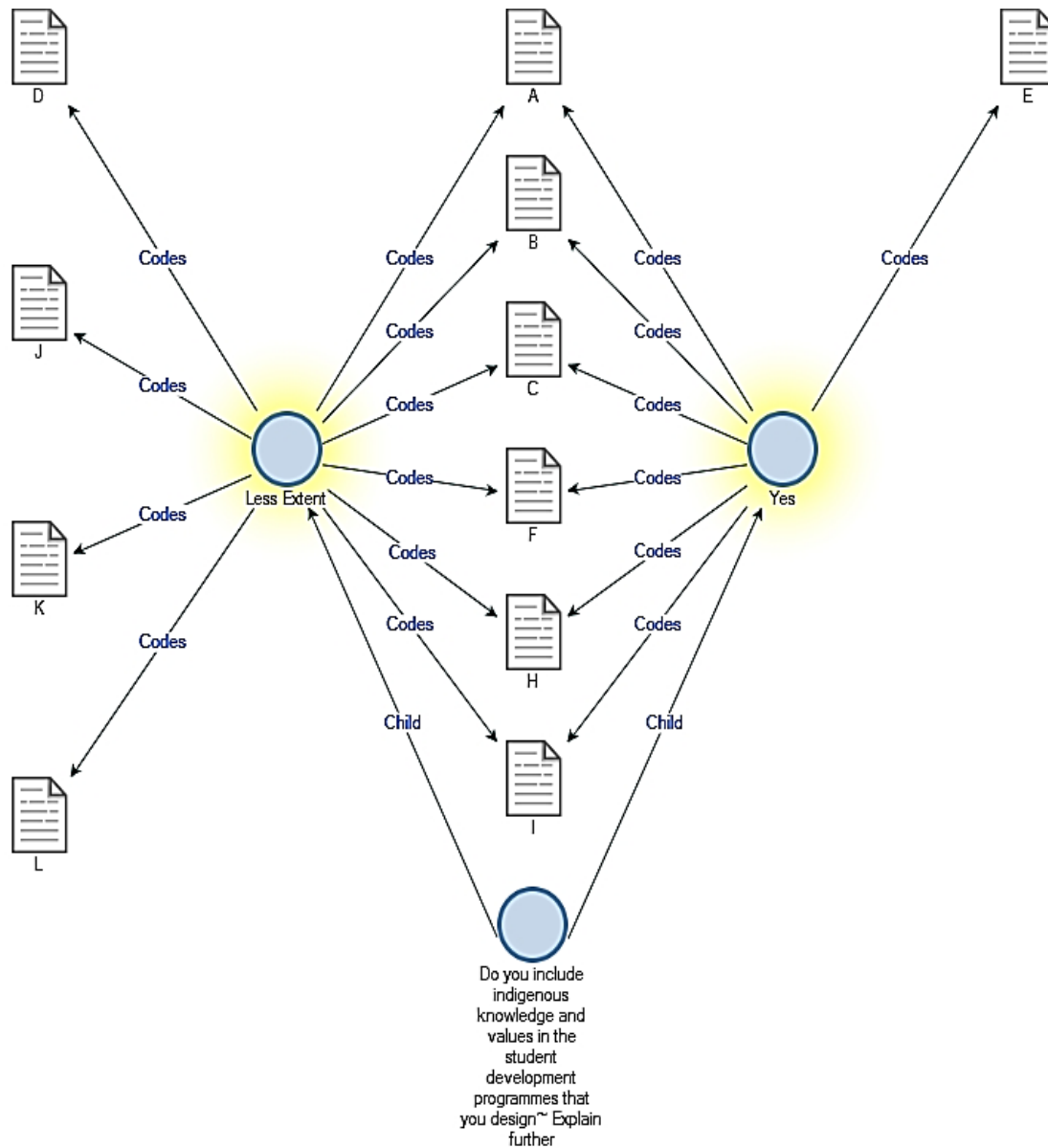
The educational and professional backgrounds of the SAPs as outlined above are important considerations to the research questions this study sought to address. The following section first presents the research questions before detailing the themes that emerged from data gathered through interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. These themes are discussed and analysed within the frame of determining the extent to which SAPs engage with decolonial practices and their support for the inclusion of indigenous epistemologies into SD practice.

#### **5.4 Engaging in decolonial practices and inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies in SD programming**

The SAPs interviewed for this study showed a varied conception of SD epistemology though the dominance of Eurocentrism was discernible. They also echoed calls for the need to decolonise SD epistemology and supported the drive to incorporate African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD theory and practice. Analysis of data that were collected from interviews with SAPs indicated that though there were attempts at incorporating indigenous Africa ways of knowing into SD programmes, the hegemony of Eurocentrism remained pervasive.

The SAPs' responses were initially coded under two emerging themes namely less extent and yes. A comparison diagram was extracted to pictorially outline the SAPs' responses. Out of the eleven SAPs who responded to the question, six affirmed that yes, they included indigenous knowledge and values in designing SD programmes, though to a lesser extent A, B, C, F, H, I.

However, only four of the respondents said that they applied them to a lesser extent D, J, K, and L. On the other hand, just one respondent's response was an absolute yes E.

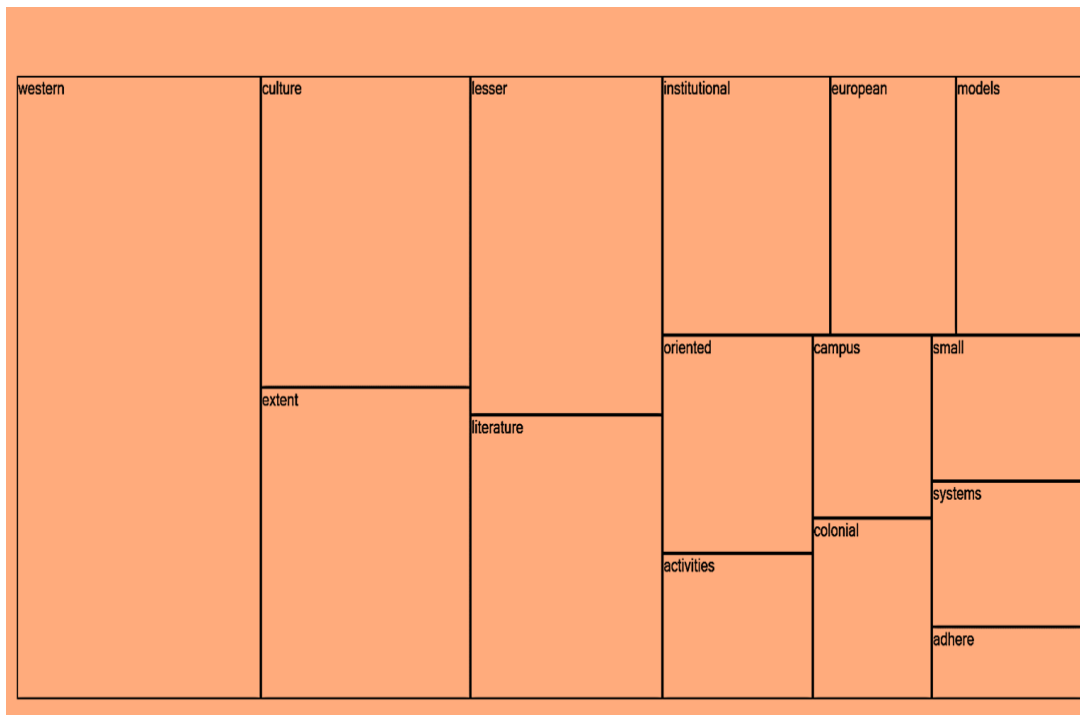


**Fig. 5.12: SAPs' responses on inclusion of indigenous knowledges**

This tallies well with the finding that engagement with approaches that promote the incorporation of African indigenous knowledges was generally very low. Further, the findings also revealed that the extent to which the operationalisation of each criterion was not consistently practised since some SAPs would have fulfilled one aspect of the conceptualisation criteria and on the others would not. This analysis points to the need to

invigorate the efforts to decolonise SD to create conditions favourable to the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies and policies in SD practice.

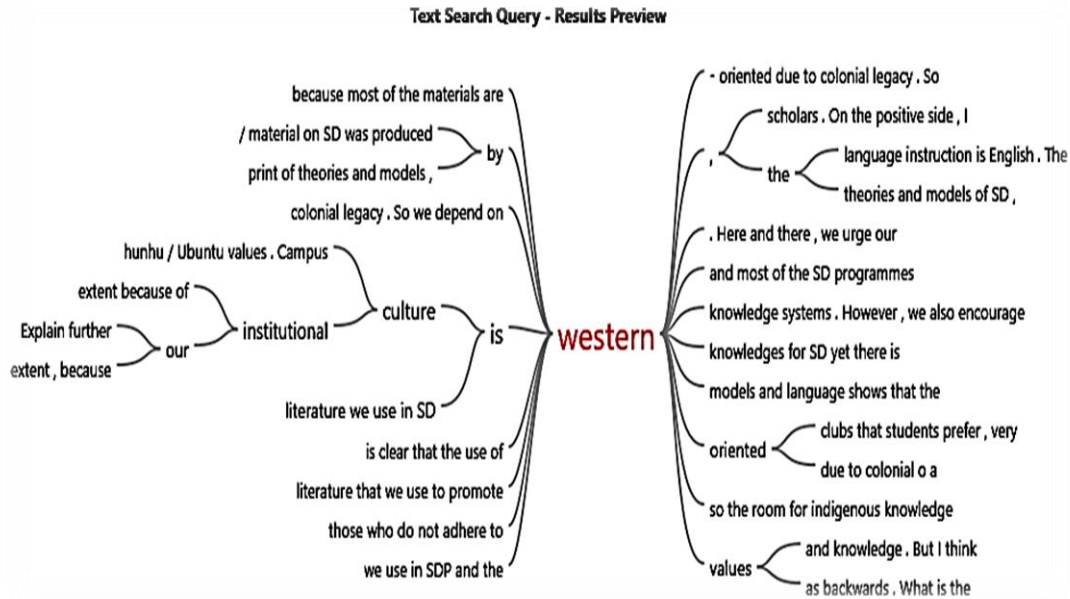
With regard to the first operationalisation criterion, nine of the SAPs acknowledged the presence of hierarchies within SD epistemology wherein African indigenous epistemologies are inferiorised. Further, they also elaborated on the impact of power relations in SD discourse which have led to the negation of African indigenous knowledges such as *hunhu/ubuntu*. Only three of the SAPs presented SD programmes from a pluriversal perspective in their programmes. A tree map was extracted from the verbatim responses of the SAPs who indicated that they incorporated indigenous knowledge and values to a less extent in SD programs designing. Three top themes that emerged included western, culture and extent.



**Fig. 5.13: Diagram on impact of Western culture**

The hegemony of Western epistemologies in SD development remained dominant as represented in word tree below:





**Fig. 5.14: Word tree of hegemony of Eurocentrism**

Therefore, this study reveals that a small number of SAPs had adopted a decolonial approach which facilitates the embedding of African indigenous ways of knowing into their programmes.

In the following section the researcher provides analysis of SAPs’ engagement with each of the decolonial criteria how their programming strategies support the mainstreaming of African indigenous ways of knowing in SD practice.

### **5.5 Analysis of the first decolonial criterion: Incorporation of non-Eurocentric epistemologies**

The first research question concerns the SAPs’ engagement with non-Eurocentric knowledges and in analysing data gathered for this study the researcher considered the recognition of the absence of African indigenous epistemology as being key to data analysis and interpretation. This helps to avoid approaches that lead to epistemicides and culturecides as a result of the subalternisation of non- Eurocentric epistemologies. In implementing this criterion, the researcher considered whether SAPs were using a pluriversal epistemology in designing and delivery of SD programmes. The researcher also asked whether the absence of African indigenous knowledges and policies in SD was being addressed and also considered whether the hierarchical categorisation of knowledges in SD epistemology was being discussed.

In the context of this study, pluriversal epistemology refers to an epistemology that acknowledges the existence of other epistemologies and diversities of ways of knowing and

discards attempts to regard Eurocentric epistemologies as universal. The researchers concur with (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) who argues that decolonisation requires dialogue between epistemologies of the Global South and those of the North. This critical dialogue would result in the creation of a pluriversal epistemology rather than an abstract universal epistemology (Aldawood, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2013; McAteer & Wood, 2018).

### 5.5.1 Dominance of Eurocentrism in SD epistemology

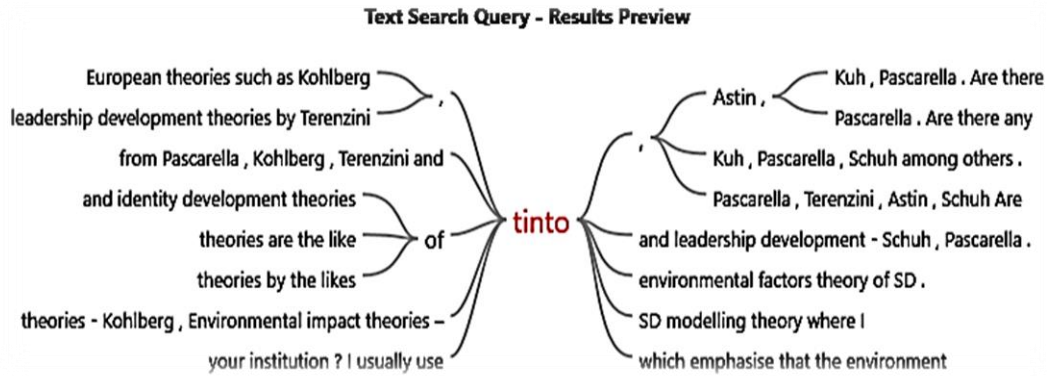
Analysis of data from interviews with SAPs revealed that five SAPs made an effort to present SD programmes that incorporated some elements of African indigenous epistemologies and policies. Six (6/12) SAPs indicated that they included some aspects of *hunhu/ubuntu* values in their SD programmes not as a contrived effort but as a result of societal influence. The other three (3/12) SAPs acknowledged that they were not even aware of the epistemological contestation in SD theories and models. This explains the dominance of Eurocentric theories in SD practice in African higher education as shown in the diagram below:

The SAPs were asked about the specific theories that guided SD at their institutions. A word cloud of their verbatim responses was extracted. Three top themes that emerged included Pascarella, Tinto and leadership.



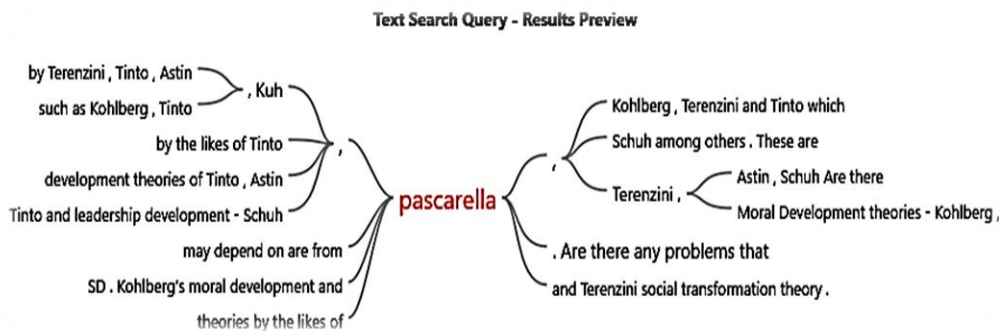
**Fig. 5.15: Theories guiding student development at the three universities**

The word “Tinto” was mentioned by eight SAPs for eight times indicating that most SAPs were aware of Tinto’s theory of student development. It was the top theme that emerged from the SAPs verbatim responses.



**Fig. 5.16: SAPs who mentioned Tinto’s theory**

The Pascarella theme was mentioned by seven SAPs for eight times indicating that the majority of SAPs used Pascarella’s theory of student involvement id SD programming. It emerged as the second most discussed theme.



**Fig. 5.17: SAPs mentioned of Pascarella’s theory of SD**

The four who indicated that they deliberately included African indigenous epistemologies and cultural values into their SD programmes explained that it was important to incorporate indigenous knowledges into SD programmes in order to fulfil their institutions’ expectations of producing holistic graduates who can fit well into their communities.

Participant A explained that:

Yes we also emphasise the need for our students to have hunhu/ubuntu values. However, it is clear that the use of western models and language shows that the space for indigenous knowledge in our activities is very small. Our campus culture is elitist and students from rural backgrounds initially struggle to fit in.

This view was supported by participant C who indicated that:

The theories we use in SD are Western so the room for indigenous knowledge is very small and informal.

Participant six F concurred explaining that:

There is some room for the inclusion of indigenous models despite the fact that our universities are based on European model that instils European values. It also depends on the philosophical interests of the practitioner.

These four participants explicitly confirmed that they contrived to present SD programmes that incorporated both Eurocentric and African indigenous ways of knowing. However, on further interrogation it was revealed that these epistemologies were not treated on equal terms because Eurocentrism had a larger percentage of material because as Participant three pointed out, it was regarded as the ‘foundational epistemology of SD theory’. This view shows that in the hierarchy of SD knowledge Eurocentric epistemology is regarded as superior owing to its geopolitical origins from Europe and North America. In delineating the centuries old hegemony of Eurocentrism, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) expounds that the Euro-North American-centric modern world system is buttressed and facilitated by a very strong cognitive domain driven by a Eurocentric epistemology. Participant K explained that:

While most of the programmes we design are Eurocentric, the cultural context in our country demands that we instil hunhu/ubuntu values into our students.

She noted that although SD theories and models were imports from the West, there was need for SAPs to create space to incorporate African indigenous knowledges and cultural values into SD programmes. She elucidated that “it is possible to accommodate a wide range of cultural values into SD activities”.

Drawing inferences from the views of these SAPs, it can be argued that there is need to address the hegemony of Eurocentrism in SD practice in Zimbabwean universities. Further, while each of the SAPs addressed the epistemology of SD, most of them were not certain whether they were attending to the need to decolonise SD epistemology. This begs the question as to whether Eurocentrism versus Afrocentrism is a false dichotomy or whether discussing it as such reifies what is actually a post-colonial binary. The discussion of binary epistemologies is important as articulated by Mapara (2017) who describes binarism as an affliction that has permeated into

the psyche of Zimbabwean academics and intellectuals to an extent where they have blindly imbibed the notion that Eurocentric epistemology is superior to African ways of knowing.

### **5.5.2 The geo-politics of SD epistemology**

Discussing the geographical origin of the epistemology that informs SD theory is a crucial in awakening SAPs and students on the politics of knowledge production and legitimation (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nisancioglu, 2018; Mungwini, 2016, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). On this aspect most SAPs indicated that they depended solely on Western theories and models of SD. Participant I defended this position pointing out that:

My training oriented me to depend content in textbooks that is in textbooks... and most of the textbooks and documents on SD originate from the West and they are written by white intellectuals. I am not certain if there written documents that contain theories that are informed by African indigenous forms of knowledge.

This status quo explains why it is important to decolonise knowledge because decolonisation calls for a paradigm shift in the realm of the geography and biography of knowledge thus, opening knowledge beyond the horizons of Eurocentrism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). It is important to sensitise SAPs and student on the pitfalls of relying solely on Western theories and books because they are the carriers of coloniality of power, knowledge and being. Three SAPs indicated that they worked in partnership with corporates and NGOs which funded some of the programmes such as leadership and mentoring programmes.

Participant K indicated that:

We work with such organisations as Star Leadership funded by large corporates, Boost-Enactus and SAYWHAT an NGO ... these provide funding of some of the SD programmes not only at this university but in almost all universities in Zimbabwe. Most of the documents that they provide are Eurocentric. Our hands are tied because they provide a lot of funding of the SD activities on campus. If we go against them we could loose their funding at a time when institutional funding of SD is drying up.

Participant G concurred pointing out that:

... these organisations bring a lot of materials on SD which is Western ... students largely participate in their programmes because of the potential of being offered employment in the corporates that fund these organisations.

This response reflects a barrier to the adoption of decolonial approaches that can create conditions that facilitate the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies in SD.

Only one SAP indicated that he engaged students on the geo-politics of knowledges that form the foundation of SD epistemology exposing students to the coloniality of power based on a racial and ethnic hierarchy and structures that privilege Eurocentric epistemologies at the expense of indigenous epistemologies. Participant H pointed out that:

It is important to alert students of the hegemonic influence of Eurocentric knowledges on SD theory resulting in the exclusion of indigenous knowledges ... Western theorists determine whose knowledge takes precedence in defining SD.

This creates a worrying scenario that only one SAP is politically conscious of the politics of epistemologies that inform SD. One aspect that comes out clearly in the responses of the SAPs is that their education and professional training was rooted in Eurocentrism. Therefore, their mindsets are conditioned to support the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies at the expense of African indigenous epistemologies and they are even proud of their Eurocentric education. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) such SAPs are not fit to lead the decolonial struggle that will create conditions conducive for mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies in SD.

### **5.5.3 Hierarchical categorisation of SD knowledges**

Closely linked to the aspect of geo-politics of SD epistemology is its hierarchical categorisation which includes the absence of African indigenous epistemologies in SD discourse. Eight SAPs indicated that hierarchies are present in SD epistemology. They pointed out that hierarchies that are embedded within SD include knowledge production and legitimisation, identity consciousness and cultural values. They further argued that Eurocentric epistemologies have been overwhelmingly prioritised in SD programmes while African indigenous epistemologies have been inferiorised.

Participant L pointed out that:

While the majority of our students come from African backgrounds the programmes that they are exposed to in SD have a thin reference to their cultural values and philosophies.

Participant F concurred by explaining that:

the dominant SD model used at our institution is the social change model which was developed in the United States of America (USA) ... this shows that our philosophies like ubuntu are not given space in the curriculum.

It is important to interrogate the hierarchical categorisation of knowledge in SD discourse because SAPs and students may continue to live with the assumption that the geo-politics of SD epistemology is a trivial matter. SD programmes should be designed in that enlightens students on the existence of these hierarchies so that they are aware of the politics of knowledge that result in the exclusion of indigenous Africa ways of knowing. Students should be conscientised of the continuity of subjugation of their knowledges, values and voices in the programmes that they participate in. As alluded to earlier, universities in sub-Saharan African countries were created by colonial administrators as an infrastructure of the empire and it was the vehicle through colonial domination was instilled into the future 'native' administrators. Within this framework, SD was designed to entrench Eurocentric forms of knowledge while indigenous knowledge systems were suppressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The fall of the empire did little to change the orientation of the universities in African countries and efforts to re-centre African indigenous knowledge systems as the sources of the curriculum knowledge were not successful.

Eurocentric theories and histories have continued to be the source materials for SD programmes thereby perpetuating the colonial hierarchical categorisation of epistemologies which privilege Eurocentrism while African indigenous knowledges are inferiorised. Further, efforts to decolonise higher education were hampered by the poor economic performance in many African countries in the late 1980's and 1990's. This led to the rise of neo-liberal economics that gave rise to economic structural adjustment programmes that inevitably led to severe cuts in governments' expenditure on higher education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

The net impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) was the halting of efforts to decolonise higher education because under neo-liberalism, knowledge was commodified as market forces and corporatist ideas took a firm grip on universities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Universities were forced to cut their expenditures and SD programmes were severely affected as institutional funding dried up and this gap was filled by corporates and Western funded NGOs who took over the funding of SD programmes in institutions of higher learning. This explains the large presence of corporates and NGOs in SD programming in Zimbabwean higher education whose philosophy of SD is Eurocentric. This development justifies calls for the decolonisation of SD epistemology and de-corporatisation of SD programming.

Participant G pointed out that Eurocentric worldviews are heavily prioritised in SD theory and he attributed this to the curriculum and institutional cultures that were inherited from colonial administrations. She explained that;

Student development is not a topical issue in our universities hence when curriculum issues are discussed it is not even considered. Take for example the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) initiative to have a minimum body of knowledge for all academic programmes offered in Zimbabwean state universities nothing is being said about student development programmes yet what students learn outside the lecture room is equally important as it shapes the student's character and world views.

Participant I concurred outlining out that:

Student development programmes developed in Europe and America are regarded as the panacea for African universities. It is time that we as African student affairs practitioners come up with our own models that take into consideration our voices, norms, values and world views.

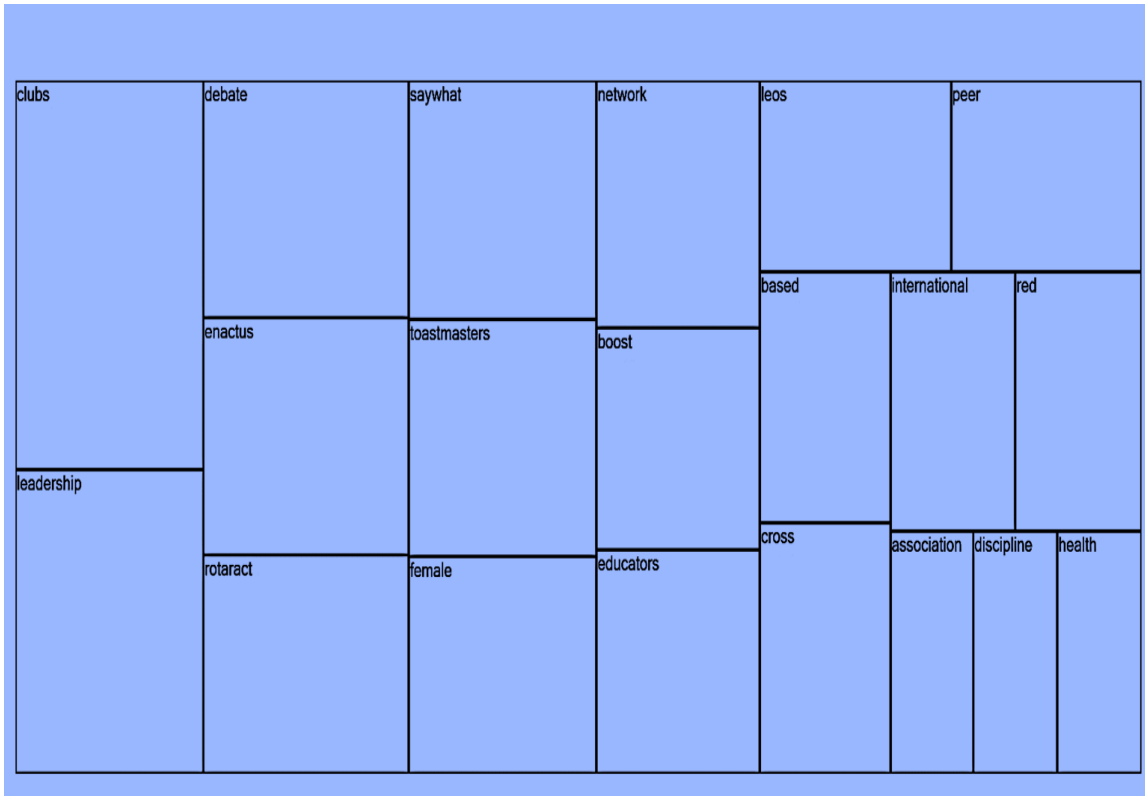
It is important to enlighten SAPs and students on the coloniality of power in SD discourse that is constructed on a racial hierarchy that privileges Eurocentric epistemologies while silencing African indigenous ways of knowing and cultural values.



#### **5.5.4 Student identity consciousness**

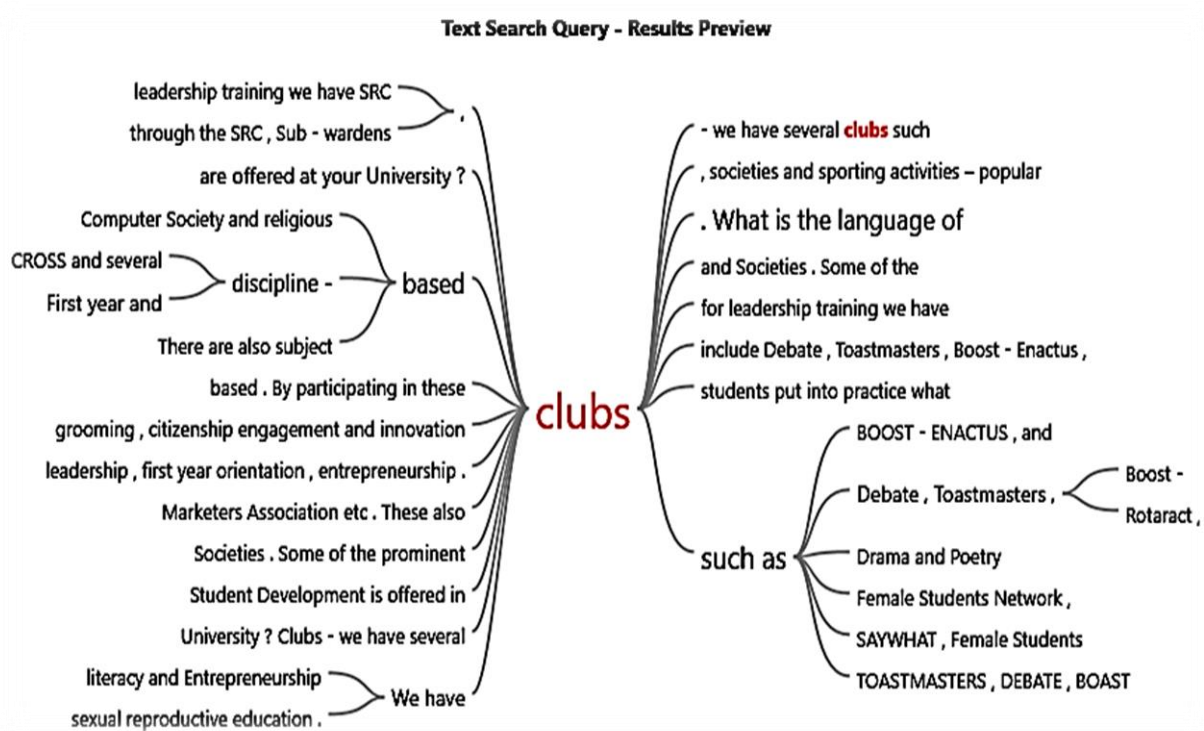
The third decolonial approach relates to social identities that are considered essential and authoritative in SD. In operationalizing this criterion, the researcher asked SAPs and student leaders the impact of SD activities on students' identity consciousness. Further, the researcher also asked questions on the impact of coloniality of power that is the socio-economic Eurocentric hegemony on students' identity awareness. Decolonial theorists argue that the major tenet of decolonial theory is that it emphasises the reality that the patterns of world power have maintained neo-colonial power over the economies of the Global South (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). This is evidenced by the economic adjustments programmes (ESAP) imposed on the economies of countries in the Global South that have forced governments to reduce expenditure on higher education. Reduction of government funding of institutions of higher learning has resulted in severe cuts on university funding of SD programmes. This has created a gap which has resulted in SD being funded by corporates and NGO's who as highlighted in Chapter 2 only sponsor programmes which suit their neo-liberal agenda.

The present study enquired from the SAPs about the student development programmes that were offered by their universities. The extracted tree map shows that a myriad of SD programmes was offered by the universities. However, the top theme that emerged from the enquiry shows that the most popular clubs were Boost-Enactus, SAYWHAT, Toastmasters and Debate.



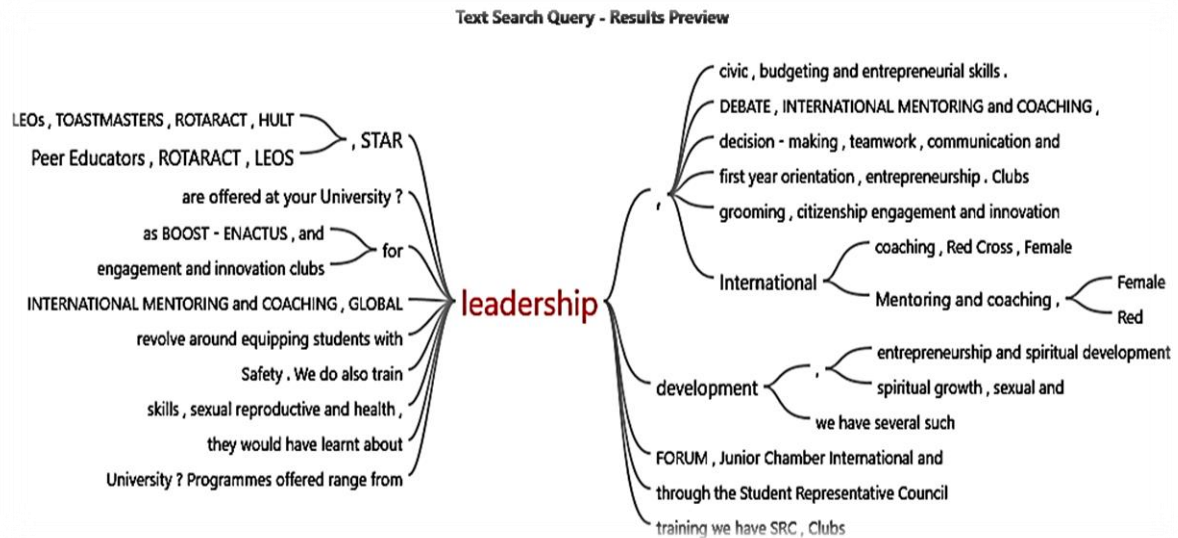
**Fig. 5.18: Diagram on student clubs**

The SAPs interviewed indicated that these clubs were dominant on their campuses because they were funded by corporates. On further interrogation, the SAPs revealed that these clubs were funded because they promoted the neo-liberal interests of the elite in society. This elitist approach to SD programming promotes Eurocentric epistemologies with devastating impact on students' minds. Hierarchies of race and class are embedded in these clubs' ethos and their impact on students is poisonous as they would lead to students shunning their cultural backgrounds imitating Western lifestyles. Fig. 5.19 below shows the most popular clubs at the three institutions as pointed out by both SAPs and student leaders. Analysis of documents also revealed that these clubs were registered and had a membership of more two hundred students each. These clubs promote power relations that favour Western knowledges leading to a SD epistemology that excludes indigenous epistemologies of the Global South. Therefore, it is important to for SAPs to acknowledge the hegemonic influence of Eurocentrism in the club activities that are funded by neo-liberal corporates and NGOs which partner them in SD programming. The word 'clubs' was the most discussed theme, which was mentioned by eleven out of the twelve SAPs who included A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K and L for eighteen times indicating that these clubs were the major vehicle through which SD was delivered. The word tree output diagram below shows what the SAPs actually said about clubs.



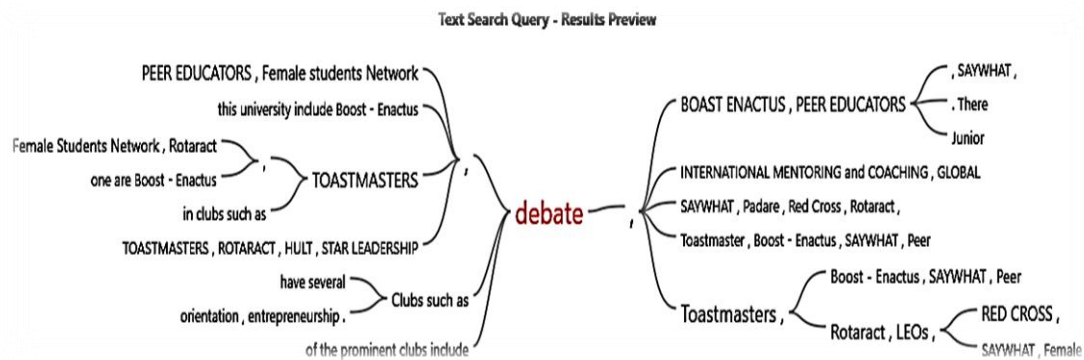
**Fig. 5.19: SAPs’ views on clubs**

Leadership, entrepreneurship, civic engagement and sexual reproductive health education were the major skills imparted through student participation in the clubs. Therefore, it is important to examine the content of SD programmes that are sponsored by corporates and NGOs as these are laden with Eurocentric knowledges at the exclusion of indigenous epistemologies. This results in epistemicides, culturecides, linguicides and valuecides of indigenous ways of knowing from the Global South. The leadership theme was discussed by eight SAPs for fourteen times and emerged as the second most discussed theme indicating that the major purpose for SD is to train leadership skills in students. However, it is important to expose SAPs and students to the impact of epistemic racism embedded in these clubs as they favour Eurocentric epistemologies against Afrocentric knowledges. Decolonising SD programmes creates conditions which are conducive to the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies and policies.



**Fig. 5.20: Role of clubs in leadership development**

The word debate was discussed by twelve SAPs for twelve times and was mentioned by four student leaders namely M, O, P and R for four times. Hence, it emerged as the third most discussed theme indicating that the Debate Club was very popular in all institutions



**Fig. 5.21: SAPs and Student Leaders' views on Debate Club**

Further, probing of the SAPs revealed that the club was very popular with students at all the three sites of the research because it was funded by banks that sponsored an inter-university tournament. It also emerged from the interviews, documents analysis and focus group discussion that SAYWHAT also funded inter-university debate competitions. What the researcher found intriguing is the fact that both these competitions were modelled along the British parliamentary debating system. This shows the enduring legacy of colonialism because there is no compelling reason for the use of the British parliamentary debating system since the Zimbabwean parliamentary system does not use it. This coloniality of power needs to be recognised and decolonised since it leads to the silencing of African indigenous epistemologies

in SD programmes. Though discouraging the use of British parliamentary debating system is not a mainstreaming of African indigenous epistemologies leap in itself, it provides a strategic starting point in decolonising SD practice. It also opens the window for the inclusion of African indigenous policies and cultural values into SD epistemology.

### 5.5.5 The Impact of Eurocentric SD programmes on student identity consciousness

SAPs and student leaders were asked questions on their perceptions of the impact of Eurocentric SD programmes on students. Their responses to this question were initially classified under positive and negative codes. The majority of the respondents perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programs on students as negative, whilst only a few saw a positive impact. Key themes that emerged from the responses of the SAPs who perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programs on students as negative included inferiority complex, identity confusion, death of traditional culture and struggling of rural students to fit in. The inferiority complex theme had 6 sub-themes that emerged under it namely skin, culture, language, dressing, hair and food. On the other hand, only two themes emerged from the responses of the SAPs who perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programmes on students as positive. These included versatility and successful graduates. The hierarchy chart showing the development of these codes and themes is shown in fig.5.22 below.

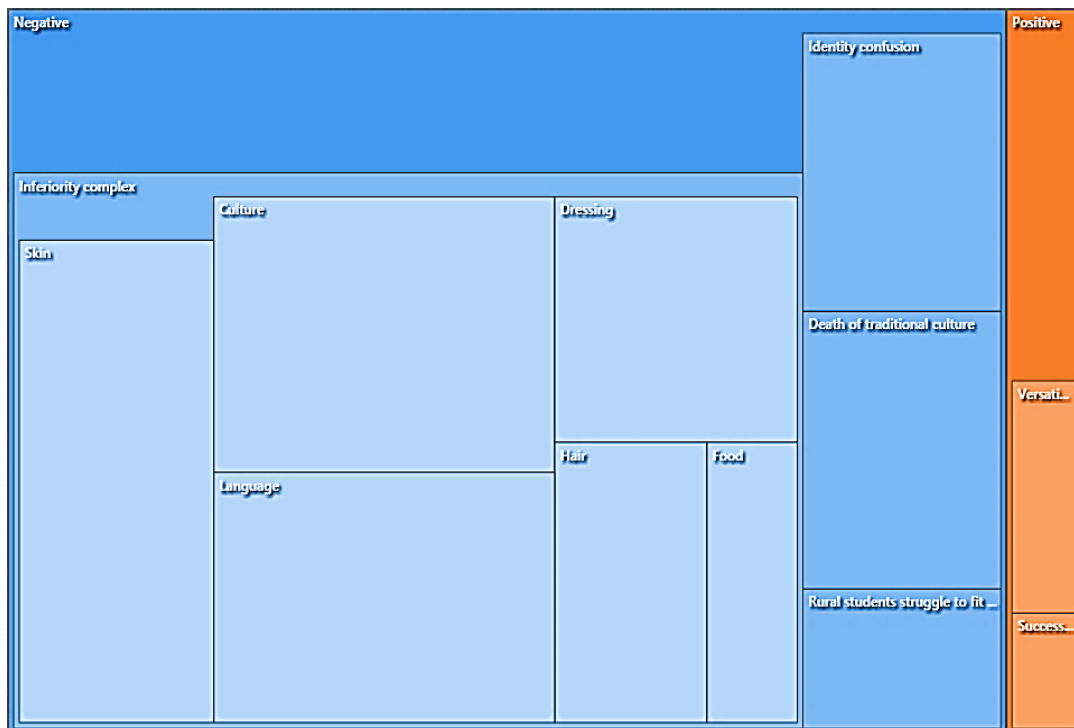


Fig. 5.22: Chart on development of codes and themes

The top three sub-themes that emerged under the main inferiority complex theme are discussed in detail henceforth.

### **Skin complexion**

The skin sub-theme was mentioned by nine SAPs for eleven times. Hence, it emerged as the most discussed sub-theme under the subject of inferiority complex. A word cloud of the verbatim responses of the SAPs who discussed issues pertaining to skin was extracted. Three issues were the most discussed namely complexion, blackness and yellow bones. It was noted that when students join the university the majority of them would be Afrocentric but after spending a year at the university they would have changed especially their skin complexion, hair style, speech tones and even food. Participant A explained that;

These programmes lead to a situation where our students look down upon their African identity; they are ashamed to be associated with their African backgrounds, especially those from the urban areas. They do not want to be associated with their African identity, girls lighten their skins and use Brazilian braids to style their hair- boys change the colour of their hair. They speak in European tones and imitate Europeans. They think by doing so they can attain high class status.

This was supported by Participant H who indicated that;

The impact is that students end up shunning their Africanness, they consider it being inferior. Indigenous cultural values end up being ended. This is seen when female students use skin lightening pills and creams to imitate being white, and we call them yellow bones. They also try to imitate white hairstyles. Male students would strive to speak through their nose imitating Western speech tones. Those who cannot catch up with these speech tones, skin colour and hairstyles are derisively regarded as SRB - i.e., those with strong rural background. So there is need to refocus our student development programmes on our local indigenous knowledges, cultural values of *hunhu/ubuntu*.

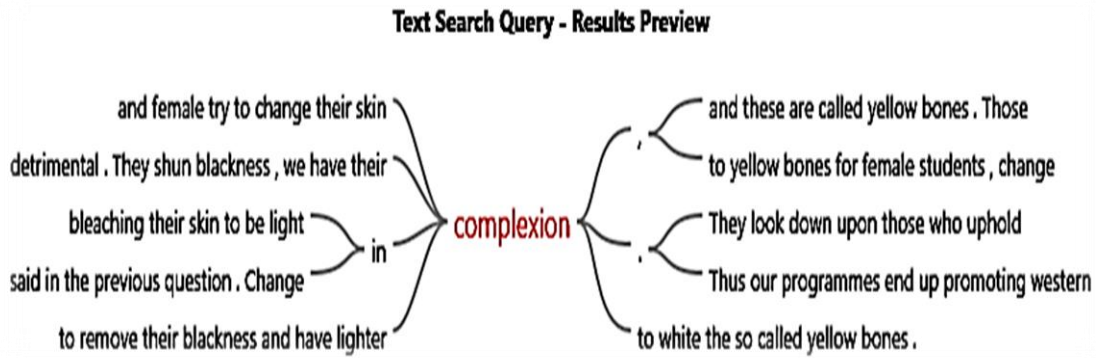
These observations by the SAPs indicate the hegemony of Eurocentric coloniality of being which is pervasive at the institutions that were studied. Coloniality of being relates to the complex processes of subjectivity that were employed to create inferiority complexes in the psyche of Africans (Maldonado-Torres, 2017).



**Fig. 5.23: Word cloud of SAPs’ views on identity consciousness**

The word complexion was mentioned by five SAPs for five times all pointing out those female students mainly would strive to change their skin complexion to imitate whiteness. This results in the yellow bone sub-culture which is popular at all the institutions which were studied. Therefore, the call to decolonise SD is imperative it empowers SAPs and students as they grapple with issues of national and cultural identity in their fight to restore their cultural and historical identity. Mapara (2017) elaborates that decoloniality is important as it is underpinned by the need to destroy the binary oppositions where white is presented as superior while black and oriental are inferior and the West is presented as the standard, while non-Europeans are inferior and have to have their feelings and values cultivated so that they become like those of Europeans.

Mapara (2009) indicates that decolonisation should be viewed as a battle premised on the need to restore lost identity, culture, values and norms by indigenous African people. The overarching presence of Eurocentrism in student development where students crave to be like Europeans because they are psyched into believing that whiteness is the standard of being has to be decolonised.



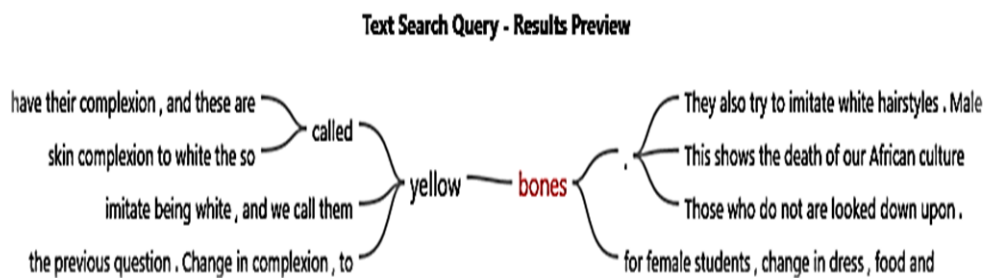
**Fig. 5.24: SAPs’ views on skin complexion**

The word blackness was discussed by four SAPs for four times. Participants B, E, G and M emphasised that;

Some of our activities promote colonial programmes designed to make our students shun their culture, languages and blackness.

This creates a sense of inferiority complex in students. The phrase ‘yellow bones’ was mentioned by four SAPs for four times. This theme was mainly highlighted by participants E, F, G and M. Participant E summed up their observations thus;

The impact of the Eurocentric SD models is that we have instilled in students the thinking that Western Culture is superior to our African Culture and our students try very hard to imitate whites in dress, hairstyle, skin colour, speech tones. The impact on students’ identity consciousness is detrimental. They shun blackness; try very hard to change their complexion by using skin lightening creams and pills. Female students who do this are called yellow bones. Those who do not are looked down upon. I have counselled students who have been stressed by others because they did not have money to buy skin lightening creams and were derided by others as being ‘bharanzi’ i.e., they speak in indigenous language tones.



**Fig. 5.25: SAPs’ views on yellow bones**



Student leaders also emphasised on the need to include African indigenous knowledges into SD programmes to stem loss of identity consciousness by students. They indicated that institutional cultures were largely Eurocentric thus promoting Whiteness as being superior to blackness. This was echoed by all the six student leader participants.

Participant M revealed that;

Western culture which is dominant at the campus and it often collides with indigenous values resulting in identity crisis in students. This lead[s] to some students trying to copy western speech tones, dress and hair styles. Students who do not have western fashioned dress feel isolated and are looked down upon. This forces some weak students to engage in practices such as prostitution to get money to buy such clothes and hair styles.

Participant N also noted that;

Social orientation of students from rural areas changes because the campus environment provides freedom where one feeds free to practice lifestyles they like. Those from rural areas are regarded as SRB (strong rural background) and they are looked down. They are often urged catch up quickly... *haikona kusarira* which literally means do not be left behind by the fashion trends. So, such students end trying hard to be elitist like their colleagues from cities.

Participant P was more emphatic on the impact of Eurocentrism on student identity consciousness;

When students come to university from high school, they quickly try to change their lifestyles, e.g., hair food and sporting clubs. For as girls, we become uncomfortable in our natural hair, we begin to use Indian and Brazilian hair/braids.... because if you are an SRB (strong rural background) type guys will not look at you. Some of the girls begin to bleach their skin to be yellow bones, who are preferred by boys.

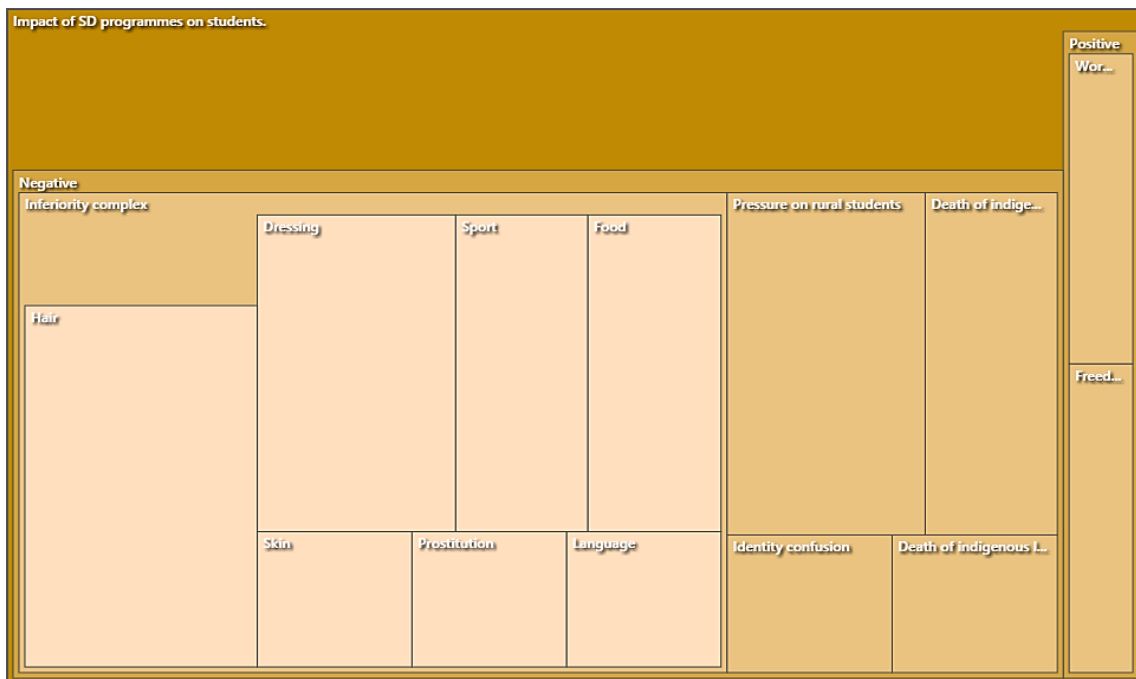
Participant O also argued that life at the campus will change one's psyche from African to Western;

When you come to university you change the type of sporting club, if you were playing football, you will change to sports of status such as rugby and cricket. Even what we eat we try to change so at the end we will be black in skin only but our thinking will be white.

This was supported by Participant R who observed that:

“Most students shun student development activities that promote indigenous culture such as traditional dance, due to inferiority complex”.

A hierarchy chart of the student leaders’ responses to the enquiry on the impact of SD programs on the growth and development of student was extracted. Their responses had initially been classified under the positive and negative codes. The majority of the SLs perceived the effect of SD programs as negative, whilst only a few had positive things to say about the SD programs. The themes that emerged under negative effects included inferiority complex, pressure on rural students, identity confusion, death of indigenous culture and death of indigenous languages. Positive effects mentioned included workplace diversity and freedom of choice of lifestyle.



**Fig. 5.26: Student leaders’ views on skin complexion**

A word cloud of the SLs whose responses were coded under the inferiority complex theme was extracted. The top three sub-themes that emerged included clubs, hair and change pointing to the desire by students to change their skin complexion and hairstyles mimicking whites. SAPs and SRC representatives’ views on the impact SD programmes including club activities converged on that they resulted in what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) termed pitfalls of identity consciousness and cultural schizophrenia in students.



Participant N concurred thus:

Campus culture at our university is a mixture of traditional and western styles, however, most students would like to follow western culture in their dress, hair styles and speech tones.

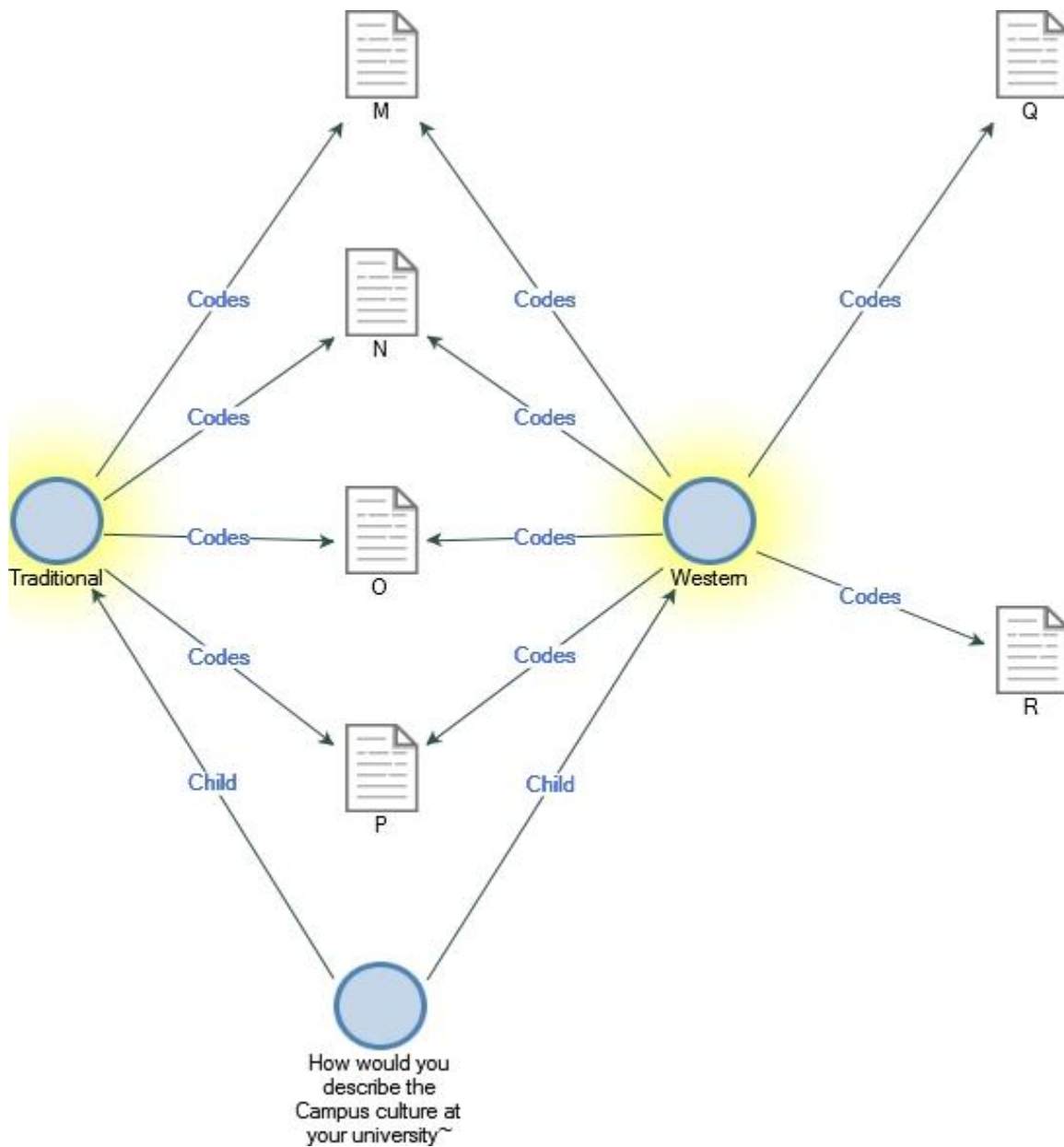
Student leader Q also noted that:

Clubs such Junior Chamber International, Boost-Enactus, Toastmasters and Rotaract are popular because they have funding from banks and other companies. This shows that our campus culture is largely Western.

Participant O brought in another dimension of the food served in the dining hall saying

“It is a blend of traditional and western though western style dominates. Even the menu in the students’ canteen is mainly Western foods and no traditional foods”.

A comparison diagram was extracted using NVIVO data analysis software to see how each of the respondents perceived the campus culture at their respective universities. Four of the SRCs believed that the culture at their universities was a mixture of traditional and western cultures with the latter being dominant. However, only two student leaders Q and R perceived their respective universities’ campus culture as mainly Western.



**Fig. 5.28: Diagram on campus culture**

The above discussion demonstrates that SD programmes and campus cultures should provide more space for African indigenous epistemologies. Epistemic diversity needs to incorporate inter-epistemic dialogue and activities so as to produce decolonial pluriversal programmes (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). The inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies and cultures into SD discourse is a necessary component for an inter-epistemic dialogue that should lead to the creation of conditions and mind sets that support the decolonisation of SD practice. Students should be exposed to critiques that expose the enduring hegemony of Eurocentrism in SD activities and campus cultures. This would lead to awareness in students of the racism embedded in Eurocentric models which could lead to a decolonisation of the student’s mind so

that they could be in a position to cherish their black African identity, cultural and epistemological heritage.

### **5.5.6 Mainstreaming African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD programmes**

Decolonial theorists argue for the inclusion of non-Eurocentric epistemologies in order to expose the hegemony of Western epistemologies which silences voices from the Global South (Maldonado-Torres, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The inclusion of marginalised and subalternised epistemologies of the Global South creates spaces for dialogue between Eurocentric and African indigenous epistemologies (Bhambra, Gebrial and Nisancioglu, 2018; Mignolo, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Santos, 2014). Student development knowledge needs to be extended beyond the Eurocentric canon so as to right the wrongs resulting from its racism and also undo the social stratification emanating from the impact of coloniality. SD discourse in African higher education could lose its efficacy to be transformational if it continues to neglect the concerns of the local peoples.

Data elicited from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis reveals some attempts by SAPs to incorporate African indigenous epistemologies into SD programmes. Out of the eleven SAPs who responded to the question, six participants A, B, C, F, H and I indicated that they included indigenous knowledge and values in designing SD programs, though to a lesser extent. Participant B expressed that;

To a lesser extent, because most of the materials are western, the theories and models of SD, the literature that we use to promote western values and knowledge. But I think this is not a big problem because we are now living in the global village where youngster quickly adapts to new cultures. Most students have forgotten their African background, there are some issues where we emphasize on hunhu/ubuntu values. Campus culture is western and most of the SD programmes we inherited are Eurocentric.

Participant F echoed similar sentiments outlining that,

Yes, but to a lesser extent due to a variety of factors such as lack of literature, almost all books/material on SD was produced by Western scholars. On the positive side, I talked about Ubuntu so we also encourage our students to have hunhu/ubuntu values.

Inferiorised African indigenous epistemologies need to be given space in SD programming to stem the epistemicides, culturecides and valuecides that result from the over-dependence on Eurocentric epistemology of SD. However, four of the respondents D, J, K and L emphasised the need to include subalternised epistemologies into SD programmes. Respondent D summed up this position indicating that,

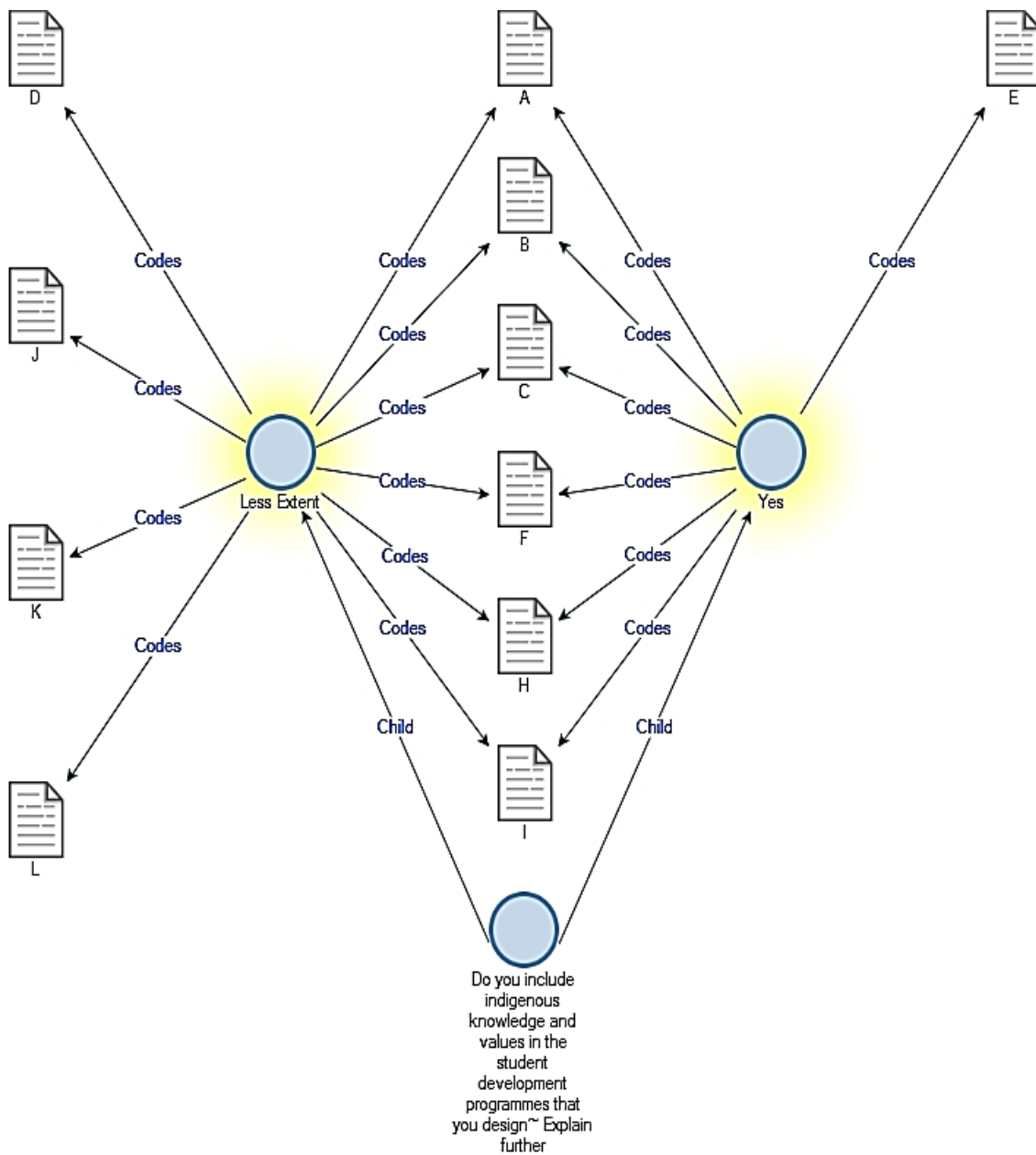
It is very important to include indigenous knowledge so as to balance campus culture with what students find in their cultural backgrounds. Campus culture is a mixture of Afro- centrism and Eurocentric with the latter gaining an upper hand. When students join the university – they are mainly Afrocentric and when they spent a year at University, they come to year 2 and 4, they would have changed, and they would now be yellow bones, nose brigades. So, there is need to impart indigenous knowledges into students through SD programmes. The majority of students at this university are from rural areas and when they come to university, they change what they eat, wear and how they talk.

On the other hand, only respondent E's response was an absolute yes affirming that they strive to embed indigenous knowledge into her SD programmes,

Hunhu/Ubuntu values and indigenous culture are part of this university's mandate and mission. So, when students come, we ask about their cultural background, we call them by their totems to try to create relationships amongst students based on their totems so as to enhance hunhu/Ubuntu values of being each other's keeper. However, we feel we could do more we need to tap indigenous knowledge from the local people. There is a lot that students can learn from the local traditional elders and leaders in areas surrounding the university.

As participant D notes it is important to be selective of which indigenous voices are included into SD programming because not all voices from subaltern their thinking. This is so due to the fact that because of globalisation and neo-colonialism the West has been able to produce clientele subjects, who Castells(2010) termed the international elite or who Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) referred to as the comprador bourgeoisie. This class comprises of African elite class that is socially located in Africa but who thinking and attitudes is epistemically Eurocentric.

A comparison diagram was extracted to pictorially outline the SAPs' responses as shown in Fig. 5.29 below.



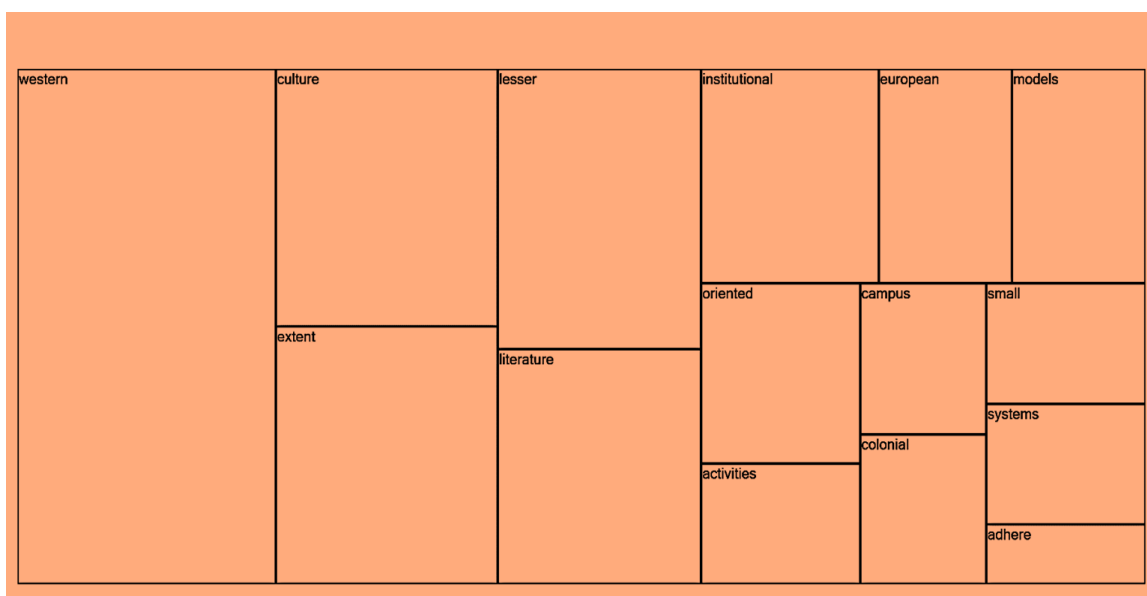
**Fig. 5.29: Inclusion of indigenous values in SD**

A tree map was extracted from the verbatim responses of the SAPs who indicated that they incorporated indigenous knowledge and values to a less extent in SD programs designing. Three top themes that emerged pointed to the over representation of Western epistemologies and culture in SD programmes. Paucity of literature that presents non-Western understanding of SD is the major setback hindering efforts to embed African indigenous knowledges into SD



activities. There are very few books or journals articles that present a decolonial approach to SD programming.

The canon of SD discourse is Eurocentric and non-Western epistemologies are ‘othered’ or inferiorised because most books and journals are written by Westerners. Another problem is that academics in the Global South are Western trained and this aligns them to Western knowledge production and legitimation systems. Further, they publish in Western journals which inferiorise epistemologies of the Global South. This explains the dominance of Western epistemologies in SD programmes in the Global South.

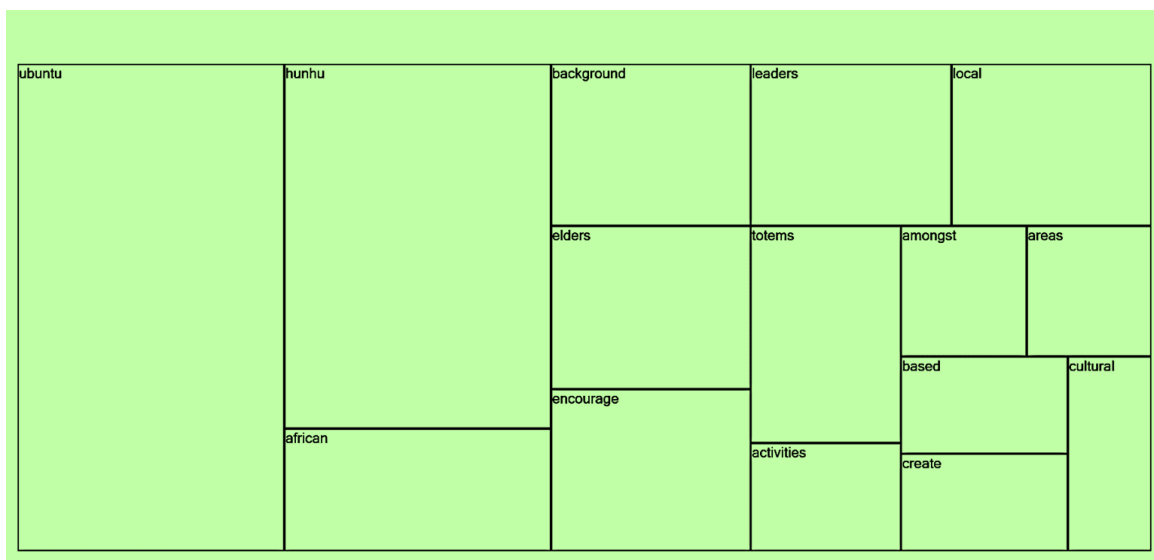


**Fig. 5.30: Diagram on dominance of Western values**

The word Western was discussed by nine SAPs for fourteen times. Hence, it emerged as the top theme confirming the hegemonic influence of Eurocentrism in SD programmes at the three institutions. The dominance of Western epistemology in SD is further explained from the perspective that SD canon is Eurocentric because its literature is aligned to the Western frame which is strongly oriented towards conformity, implying that researchers have to conform to the Western system that alienates non-Western epistemologies Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020). Further, the absence of African indigenous knowledges in SD discourse can be attributed to the Western segregatory belief which argues that non- Western societies have no concepts of SD, therefore there is no need to interrogate their ideas.

Six respondents indicated that they included indigenous knowledges into SD to a lesser extent citing the dominance of Western epistemology in SD theories and models. Further, lack of literature on SD from the African indigenous locale led to the over use of Eurocentric models and theories. Five SAPs explained that efforts to include indigenous African epistemologies into SD were hampered by the enduring Eurocentrism informing campus culture at the three institutions. This results in metaphysical identicide as students strive to think, behave and act like Europeans. Both SAPs and student leaders explained that the campus culture at their universities was largely Western. This was attributed to the enduring cognitive empire, which is the colonisation of the mind that was unleashed by the West as it was bringing to an end the political empire. Decolonial theorists have described this new form of colonisation as coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Grosfoguel, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2019; Mignolo, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2015; 2018, 2020; Santos, 2014). Inclusion of epistemologies of the local peoples of the Global South will help remedy the situation and enhance the holistic student development mantra reflected in most policy documents analysed as part of data collection of this study.

Another tree map of the verbatim responses SAPs who highlighted that they incorporated indigenous knowledge and values in designing their SD programs. The key theme that emerged was *hunhu/ubuntu*.



**Fig. 5.31: Tree map of SAPs' views on Hunhu/ubuntu**

*Hunhu/ubuntu* was the most discussed word, which was mentioned by six SAPs for eight times. Participant L explained that:

Student development should be inspired by *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy where the well-being of the individual depends on others and vice versa. If our students are endowed with *hunhu/ubuntu* values, then we will produce responsible members of society with integrity.

This was supported by participant B who voiced that:

We urge our students to value *hunhu/ubuntu* especially respecting elders. We need to use our own African languages to be able to instil our indigenous values into students.

Participant C elucidated that:

Student development concepts found in these theories are opposed to our African background e.g., Western theories promote individualisation which is contrary to our local African values mainly of *hunhu/ubuntu* that promote togetherness. So at the end we see that we would have produced graduates who shun their backgrounds and who regard western ‘things’ as more superior to our local African ones.

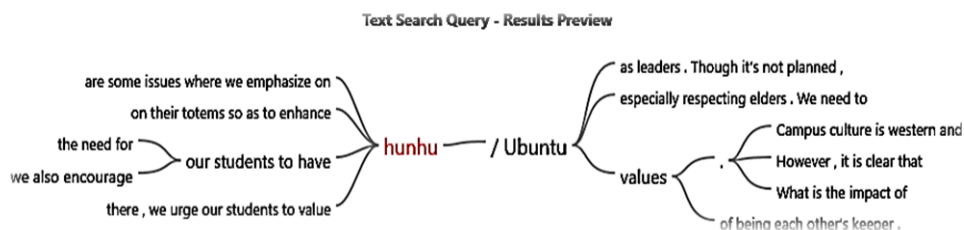
Student leaders were also very clear on the need to include *hunhu/ ubuntu* values in student development programmes. Participant O explicated that:

Firstly, we should consider using our indigenous languages in the curriculum and this will make students to be proud of languages and black identity. Inculcating *ubuntu* values helps raise students’ self-esteem and make them be proud of their African identity.

This was supported by Participant Q who expressed that:

Student development should prioritize African indigenous menus in the canteen, the speaking of indigenous languages, life like Shona, Ndebele, Ndau, Kalanga, Venda, and Shangani in university committee meetings. We should also set aside a day per week where students and staff wear African attire and encourage Afrocentrism. There are no longer Tetes (Aunties) and Sekurus (uncles) to impact *ubuntu* values in the young therefore the curriculum should be designed to play that role.

Student development plays a key role in moulding holistic graduates who excel academically and are also morally upright and this cannot achieve through relying solely on Western epistemologies while excluding epistemologies of local people where student hail from.



**Fig. 5.32: Student leaders' views on inclusion of hunhu/ubuntu**

SAPs and student leaders contend that student development programming and presentation should provide spaces for African indigenous epistemologies and policies to produce epistemic diversity and cognitive justice. Sole dependency on Eurocentric epistemologies does not create a conducive environment for decolonisation thus paving way for the mainstreaming of African indigenous knowledges, languages and values into student development. While some of the SAPs explained that they included some aspects of indigenous epistemologies in their student development programmes, not even one of them stated that they used a decolonial approach.

Student development should be viewed from the frame that recognises that it is a discourse where coloniality is omnipresent. The apparent lack of analysis that explicitly accentuates the impact of coloniality and the ensuing marginalisation of non-Eurocentric epistemologies reveals the need for approaches that can be applied where the links between coloniality and SD can be deliberated. Exposing the absence of African indigenous knowledges and policies in SD epistemology is important for this anomaly to be addressed. This is important because it is almost impossible to imagine a successful project to mainstream local epistemologies into SD in African higher education without deliberating on the impact of coloniality on its discourse. Decolonisation must involve interrogation of the complicity between SD discourse and neo-colonial epistemic and ontological domination (Bhambra, Gebrial, & Nisancioglu, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). This is because SD practice should not be divorced from the experiences of local people where the university is situated.

## 5.6 Recap of the findings

The data analysis from in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and documents shows that the majority of SAPs have not yet fully embraced strategies that promote the mainstreaming of African indigenous epistemologies and policies to their student development practice. However, most SAPs subscribe to the need to engage with some of the tenets of decolonisation by embedding African indigenous values into their programmes. Most of the remarks by SAPs indicate an understanding of the effects of the hierarchical categorisation of the knowledges

that inform SD theory. Under this categorisation, non-Eurocentric epistemologies are inferiorised and invisibilised. The researcher noted that some SAPs made efforts to incorporate *hunhu/ubuntu* values into their programmes. This is important as it could provide the stimulus to launch the start of a meaningful decolonisation programme which can facilitate the inclusion of African indigenous knowledges into SD theory. This approach could then lead to the more intricate process of decoloniality which involves addressing how SD is implemented in the context of coloniality. Decoloniality provides an analysis of the epistemologies, relationships and structures that inform SD knowledge. SAPs would need to examine their programmes in order to adopt approaches that reflect the views of African indigenous epistemologies and policies as the foundation on which their SD programming is based. This entails that SD programmes must include materials that view decolonisation and mainstreaming epistemologies of the local communities where universities are situated.

Anchoring SD programming on African indigenous epistemologies is important because SD programmes in post-colonial Zimbabwe lack rootedness in indigenous knowledge systems of the local people. This is the approach where decolonisation of SD should lead to in terms of considering identity consciousness training where the experiences of the indigenous African people are key elements that constitute what counts as knowledge in SD theory. SAPs should consider the importance of adopting a pluriversal epistemology of SD in order to elevate non-Western epistemologies to the position where they are viewed as equally authoritative ways of knowing capable of achieving universality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Pluriversalism demands that SD discourse is a result of knowledge production that is open to epistemic diversity.

## **5.7 Chapter summary**

Mainstreaming of African indigenous epistemologies is part of a complex process of decolonising student development in higher education. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of SAPs are not implementing a decolonial approach in their design of SD programmes. Six of the SAPs were not even aware of what it means to decolonise, let alone the conditions necessary for decolonisation of SD to take place. Although four of the SAPs explained that they included some aspects of *hunhu/ubuntu* into their SD programmes, this is too inadequate as their programmes have remained largely Eurocentric in scope and purpose. The clubs that dominate SD activities at the three institutions are outposts for the preservation of Eurocentrism since they are remnants of colonial education. The clubs are, therefore, carriers of coloniality. This is because Zimbabwe like other Sub-Saharan African countries emerged

from colonialism with political independence without epistemological freedom. Without epistemological decolonisation the tendency in university education has been the continuation of the colonial practice leading to epistemicides, linguicides, culturecides and valuecides. The result of this type of education has been the production of graduates who suffer colonisation of the mind and thus lack identity consciousness e.g., ‘yellow bones’ and ‘salads’. The continued use of SD models that reify Eurocentric epistemologies limits the creation of conditions that promote the adoption of a pluriversal epistemology.

The next chapter discusses the practices of the SAPs in implementing their SD strategies. It also delves into a reflection of what SAPs mentioned as the factors that motivated them to be in SD and how their training prepared them for the job. The chapter ends with examining what the SAPs outlined as challenges affecting them in their practice. Possible solutions to the challenges will be proffered.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS IN MAINSTREAMING AFRICAN INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGIES**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter analysed student development practice using the decolonial criteria initially outlined in Chapter 3 and which was operationalised for measurement in chapter 4. The analysis revealed that most of the SAPs were not including African indigenous epistemologies into their SD programmes. It was also noted that little attention was being paid on the need to put into consideration social identities which were hegemonic in SD. The analysis also exposed that there was over-dependence on the Eurocentric canon of SD discourse. This chapter focuses on the implementation rather than the design side of student development. In doing so the researcher reveals his personal assumptions of the practice of SD based on his experiences as a student development practitioner at two of the case universities of this study. In this chapter the researcher also reflects on the problems and challenges faced by SAPs including himself that are based on professional training, lack of funding and lack of policy guidelines relating to SD. This is important as it highlights how SAPs could better engage with decolonial practices that could pave the way for the inclusion of subaltern voices and experiences into SD practice. The chapter ends by highlighting the stumbling block that affect the mainstreaming of the indigenous knowledges into SD and also proffers solutions to overcome these problems.

### **6.2 Challenges hindering mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges into SD practice**

Student Affairs practitioners were also probed on the challenges that they faced which stifled their efforts to include indigenous epistemologies into student development practice. It emerged that A, B, E, G, H and L elaborated that lack of time negatively impacted student development programming since the timetable was congested with academic curricula activities. Participant G explicitly summed up the position indicating that;

Student development programmes are not given enough recognition therefore they are not catered for on the timetable. So, we are forced to do student development

programmes after hours. Students will be tired and some who stay out of campus will would have left campus.

This kills innovation and resultantly SAPs will be forced to do what they are familiar with, namely clubs and activities that are laden with Eurocentric epistemology. As such institutional timetables should be planned in a way that recognises the importance of these programmes. Such recognition would provide SD with space for African indigenous epistemologies and policies to be heard on campus.

The dearth of literature on student development that presents a non-Eurocentric understanding of SD is a major stumbling block to the adoption of a decolonial approach. There are very few books or journals that decolonial approach to SD programming. Participant A clearly articulated the problem explaining that:

Theories and models that form the bedrock of SD canon are Eurocentric and African indigenous epistemologies are not represented in that canon.

Participant C concurred with this view elaborating that:

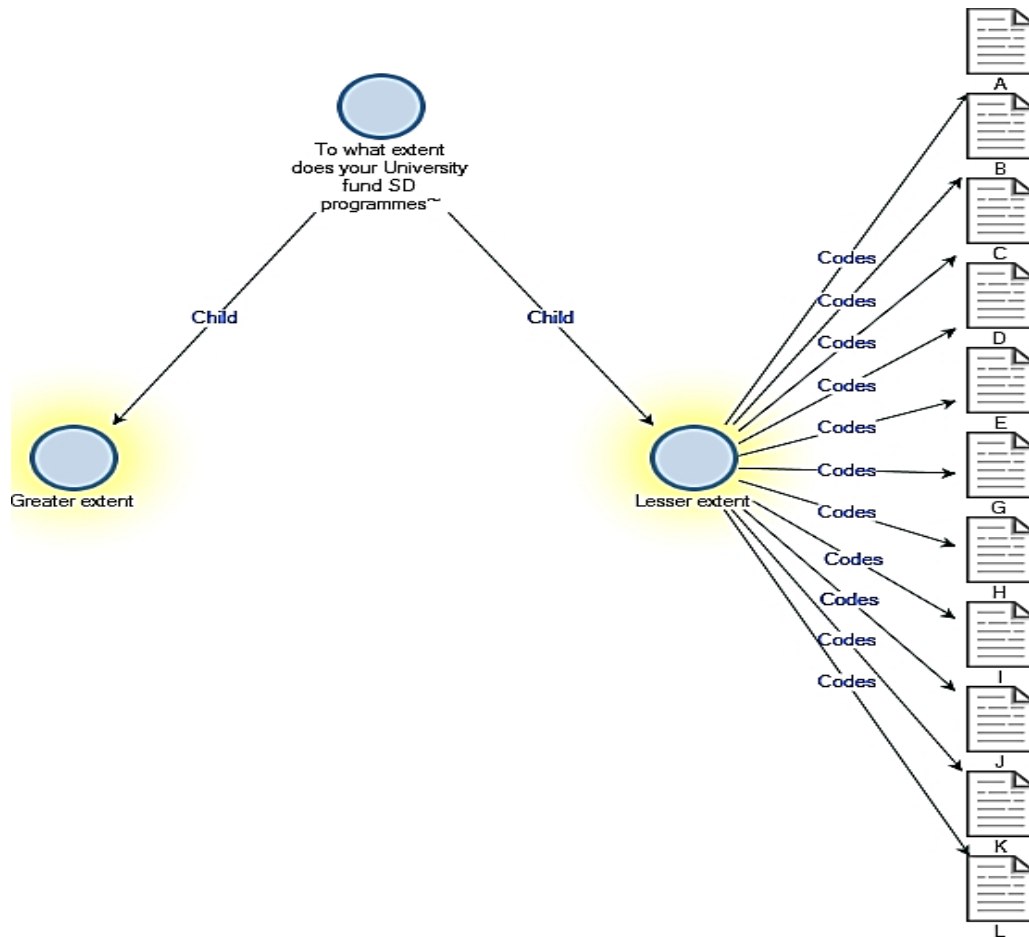
Non-Western epistemologies are absent in our practice of student development because most books and journal are edited and published in the West. Even our own academics are Western trained hence their scope is Western oriented.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) the West has been able to reproduce itself in the Global South through the elite bourgeoisie class that also includes academics and institutions such as universities. This class is geographically and socially located in the Global South but they think epistemically like the West and the university promotion system aligns them to the Eurocentric knowledge production and legitimation system. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) further expounds that literary works by academics from the Global South are aligned to the Eurocentric frame of reference that orients them to conformity to Western systems that alienates knowledges from the subaltern. This rigid Western system makes it hard to accept non- Eurocentric knowledges.

The study enquired the extent to which universities funded SD programs from the SAPs. Their responses were classified under the greater extent and lesser extent codes, from which a comparative diagram was extracted. All the SAPs highlighted that universities funded SD programmes to a lesser extent.



This created a big problem for SAPs because lack of funding negatively affects the implementation of SD activities. Lack of funding opens a gap which is usually filled by external stake holders such as corporates and NGOs who come with their own agendas which may not be compatible with the values of the SAPs.



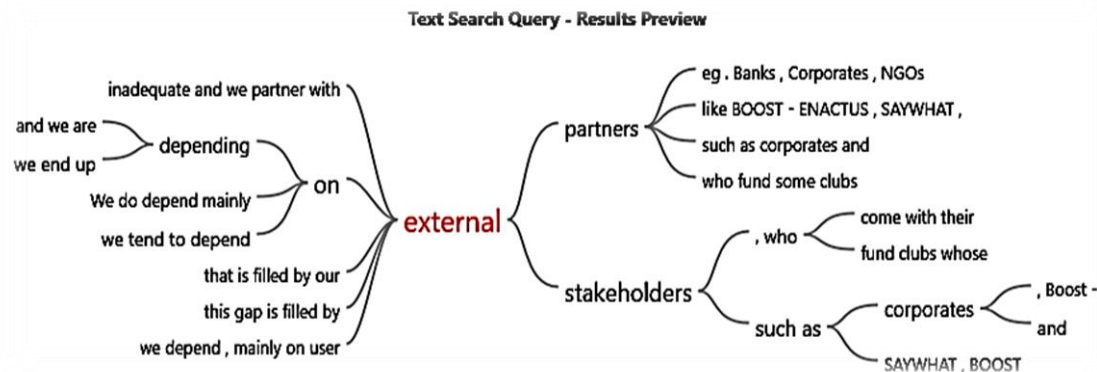
**Fig. 6.1: SAPs' views on university funding of SD programmes**



**Fig. 6.2: Word cloud of SAPs verbatim responses on SD funding**

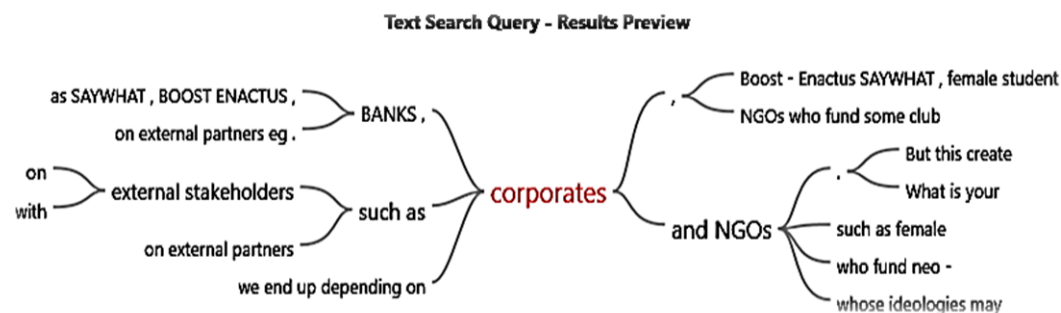
The top theme that emerged was external corporates funding indicating that lack of institutional funding opened doors to SD in institutions of higher learning being funded by corporates and other external stakeholders such as NGOs.

The word external was the most discussed. It was mentioned by nine SAPs namely A, B, C, D, F, G, H, K, and L for ten times referring to external stakeholders who partnered with SAPs in SD programmes.



**Fig. 6.3: word tree on external stakeholders**

Corporates was the second most discussed theme which was mentioned by seven SAPs who included A, B, C, D, E, H, and J for seven times. The corporates that were mentioned comprised mainly banks though no specific names were provided.



**Fig. 6.4: Word tree on corporate funding**

Funding was the third most discussed word which was mentioned by six SAPs A, C, E, K. and L seven times.

The above scenario reflects that poor funding of student development programmes was cited as a major stumbling block to the inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies into SD. External stakeholders who partnered Student Affairs departments through funding some SD programmes tended to dictate the nature of the activities they preferred to fund. This explains why Western oriented clubs are flourishing on campuses. Both SAPs and students' leaders concurred on the observation that pro-Eurocentric clubs were popular on campuses. SAPs indicated that some of their programmes promoted behaviour which is against societal expectations. Participant B explained that:

Yes, but to a very little extent. We do depend mainly on external stakeholders such as SAYWHAT, Boost-Enactus, Banks, Corporates and NGOs such as female student Network, Padare, Junior Chamber International. SD is not valued much and it is not timetabled and it is left to be done informally, hence this gap is filled by external stakeholders, who come with their own agenda and they only fund activities that meet the requirements.

This view was supported by participant D who stated that:

Student Development is not seriously regarded, hence funding is just too little. Further, SD is not timetabled therefore programmes are not usually budgeted for. So, we end up depending on external partners e.g. Banks, Corporates and NGOs who fund some club activities. This is good but it takes away our power to decide which programmes they should fund as they come with their own agendas. Their literature is Eurocentric and they strive to produce leaders who are programmed to support Eurocentric views and perspectives.

A closer analysis of these two participants' views shows that external funding is used to mask the real problem which is the status which student development is afforded by the executive management at the institutions of higher learning. SD is treated as none core business of the university hence it is not budgeted for nor timetabled. If SD is to achieve its core function of producing well-rounded graduates, then the prevailing scenario at most universities has to be changed. Decolonisation of SD may not be successfully undertaken if its practice and survival remains at the mercy of corporates and NGOs who promote a neo-liberal agenda. Further, mainstreaming of African indigenous knowledges into SD programmes cannot be expected to happen when these programmes are surviving on handouts from organisations that promote a Eurocentric ideology. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020:15) it is impossible to “free

yourself from the master's yoke using the master's tools". Therefore, it is important that higher education institutions provide budgetary support for SD programmes so that external would come to partner universities and not set the agenda on which programmes should be offered or not.

The other problem that has been highlighted is cultural ambivalence faced by students mainly from rural backgrounds when they come to universities. They are exposed to programmes which Participant D described as promoting promiscuity especially the free distribution and lessons on use of condoms and morning after pills.

Participant H lamented that:

We have a levy for SD programmes; however, it is inadequate and we end up depending on our partners like Banks, SAYWHAT, National Aids Council, Higherlife Foundation, Boost-Enactus but the problem is that they tend to fund programmes that are in line with their interests which are neo-liberal. For example, funding for SD is very small. For example, some of our partners emphasise the use of condoms and morning after pills.

This may be interpreted as encouraging promiscuity while in African culture youths are encouraged to refrain from sexual activities before marriage. This cultural incompatibility affects students from rural areas mainly because back home their parents expect them to shun away from sexual activities. However, at university they are exposed to the condom and the morning after pill during first year orientation programmes. SAPs should wake up to the reality that the programmes they implement are an imitation of the Western models rather than projects for the epistemological transformation of their societies. This is because they are not rooted in African indigenous epistemologies. Therefore, mainstreaming African indigenous knowledges into SD is essential in order to open SD theory beyond Eurocentric epistemology.

### **6.3 Deficiency in SAPs 'Educational Training and Professional Development**

Nine out of twelve of the SAPs i.e., C, D, E, G, H, I, K and L expressed that their educational and professional training prepared them for their job as student development practitioners. However, an analysis of their responses on issues relating to decoloniality shows that they were still to comprehend what decolonisation entails. Lack of training of SAPs in SD is a serious challenge that impedes the decolonisation agenda in SD practice. Therefore, to facilitate the implementation of a decolonial approach in SD, the student Affairs practitioners need to

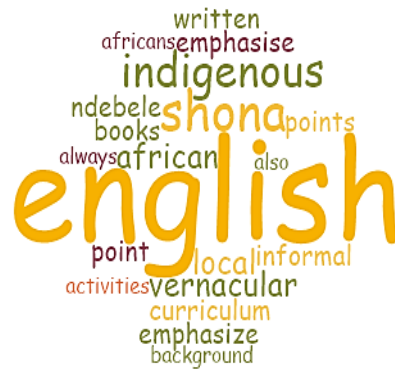
undergo a paradigm shift in epistemic cognition. Epistemic cognition relates to the way SAPs acquire, comprehend and use knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; 2018). Thus there is need to expose SAPs to decolonial thinking as this may trigger an awareness in their thought processes for the need of a new SD epistemology. Oyedemi (2018) propounds that reflection on epistemic beliefs facilitates cognitive change. SAPs should reflect on their own practices and principles as well as the social impact of their epistemologies on students. These reflexive practices may lead them to epistemic awareness that may open the way for mainstreaming indigenous knowledges into student development. SAPs should be staff developed so that they could freely engage with African indigenous epistemologies in their SD programming. Continuous exposure to decolonial thinking may help them adopt pedagogical strategies to mainstream African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD programmes.

#### **6.4 Impact of neo-liberalism and Globalisation**

In Chapter one, the researcher explored challenges affecting the inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies and policies into SD. The main ones that were highlighted included the impact of neo-liberalism and its twin globalisation. Apart from the impact of neo-liberal funding of SD programmes, their other major effect has been the prioritisation of corporate power, values and culture which are now embroiled in most higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mamdani, 2016; Mbembe, 2016a; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Schreiber, 2014). This neo-liberal approach to higher education has resulted in universities being classified as knowledge producing corporates. Knowledge has been commodified and this defeats attempt to dismantle the Eurocentric coloniality embedded in the university's institutional culture because non-Western knowledges have further been marginalised. This intensifies the need to overcome the stranglehold of neo-liberalism and globalisation on the Zimbabwean universities' campus culture. Eurocentric hegemony is a significant barrier to the inclusion of African indigenous epistemologies into SD in higher education.

#### **6.5 Coloniality of Language**

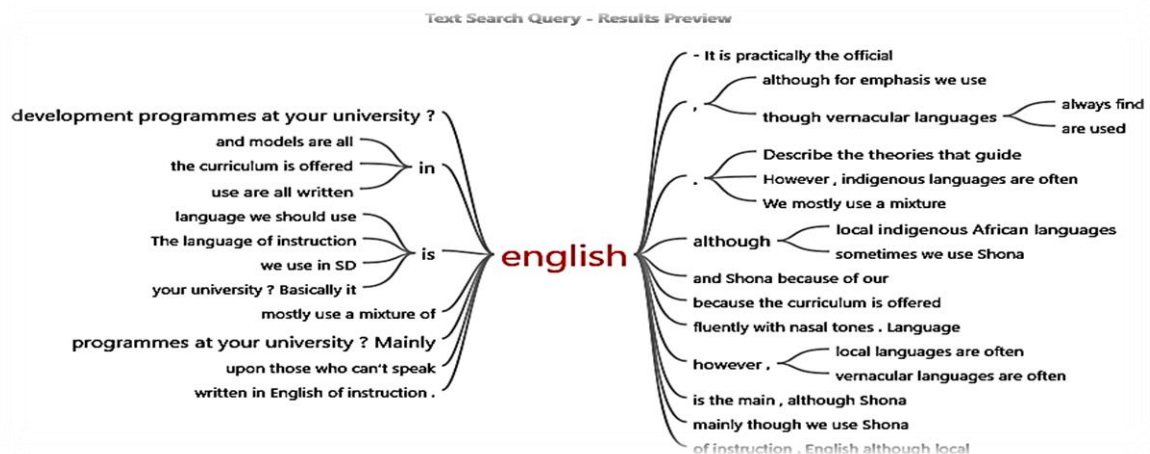
A word cloud of the SAPs' verbatim responses to the enquiry on the language of instruction in SD programs at their universities was extracted. The top theme that emerged shows that English is the dominant pedagogical language while Shona, Ndebele and other indigenous languages are marginalised.



**Fig. 6.5: Word cloud the dominance of English language**

### 6.6 The dominance of English as the language of instruction

English emerged as the most discussed word by the SAPs, which was mentioned by eleven respondents namely, A, C, D, E, F, G, G H, J, K, and L for nineteen times. The use of English as the sole language of instruction is justified on the ground that it increases students; epistemic access and ultimately success. Yet the reality is that colonial languages played a big role in creating knowledge frameworks that rationalised the displacement of local languages in the curriculum (Kerfoot, 2021). The removal of local languages from the curriculum resulted in epistemic power being from the indigenous people (Ngugi, 1992; 1997). The effect of this epistemic dismemberment was the perpetuation of epistemic injustices through the privileging of Western languages in the production and legitimation of knowledge (Mungwini, 2017; Odora Hoppers, 2007).



**Fig. 6.6: Word tree on SAPs views on English language**

The word Shona was mentioned by four SAPs, A, B, D, and F for Six times. Hence, it emerged as the second most discussed theme. A word tree output diagram of the SAPs responses centred

on the word Shona was extracted. Participants A, D and F highlighted that they used the Shona language at the same time with English but they would resort to Shona to emphasise a point. Participant A mentioned that:

We use English mainly though we also use Shona here and there. Though officially the language we should use is English. We mostly use a mixture of English and Shona because of our cultural background. We are Africans and to emphasize a point we use Shona which is easily understood by most students.

Participant's response indicates that though Shona and other local indigenous languages are marginalised, they are the default mode which SAPs use to emphasise or clarify points. This point is quite significant because as earlier pointed out in Chapter three of this thesis, indigenous languages are carriers of traditional culture and it is high time that they are recognised as languages of pedagogy in higher education institutions. Use of local languages also help in stemming linguicides that is the killing of indigenous languages due to hegemonic influence of Eurocentrism which imposes linguistic dependency on European languages in teaching and research.

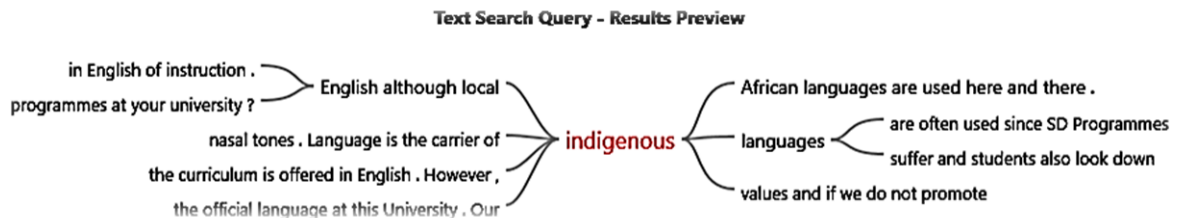
Participant D concurred with this view saying:

The language of instruction is English although sometimes we use Shona and Ndebele, to emphasize a point. The literature that we use, the theories and models are all in English.

While Participant D agrees with Participant B on the use of local languages to stress a point, what can also be discerned from her explanation is that there is need for African academics to produce theories and literature on student development that is informed by indigenous epistemologies and policies. Hountongji (1990) cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) expounds that there is need for African higher education to delink itself from dependence on Western foreign libraries and documentation centres for information. This call is important due to the fact that for decolonial pedagogy of SD to succeed there is need to reduce importation of theories and models from the West. In the same vein, Smith (1999) warns that one cannot destroy the master's workshop using the master's tools. This implies that mainstreaming of African indigenous epistemologies cannot be successfully incorporated using foreign languages and theories.

## 6.7 Marginalisation of indigenous languages

The third most discussed word by the SAPs was indigenous languages, which was mentioned by three respondents namely H, J and L for five times. The word tree output for the word indigenous was subsequently extracted.



**Fig. 6.7: Word tree of marginalisation of indigenous languages**

The word tree out diagram above indicates that indigenous languages are being peripherised. The SAPs' responses show that indigenous languages are used as a secondary option only for the purposes of stressing a point.

Participant B outlined that:

We use English although local indigenous African languages are used here and there. Books that we use are all written in English of instruction. English although local indigenous African languages are used here and there. Books that we use are all written in English.

This point was also emphasised by Participant C who explained that:

Though officially the language we should use is English. We mostly use a mixture of English and Shona because of our cultural background. We are Africans and to emphasize a point we use Shona which is easily understood by most students.

Participant D was very categorical on the impact of marginalisation of indigenous languages in SD indicating that:

The language that we use in SD is English. It is practically the official language at this University. Our indigenous languages suffer and students also look down upon those who can't speak English fluently with nasal tones. Language is the carrier of indigenous values and if we do not promote our languages, they will end up being neglected.



This prevailing situation is harmful to the survival of indigenous culture because death of a language results in the death of culture since language is a carrier of culture. As argued above this situation needs to be addressed at policy level. This is mainly because institutional policies are the ones directing that English must be the language of instruction and this creates a challenge to SAPs as well as to academics in delivering their lectures. There are situations when academics also turn to local languages in their efforts to help learners understand difficult concepts. This study advocates for the prioritisation of local languages for pedagogical purposes on equal footing with Western languages.

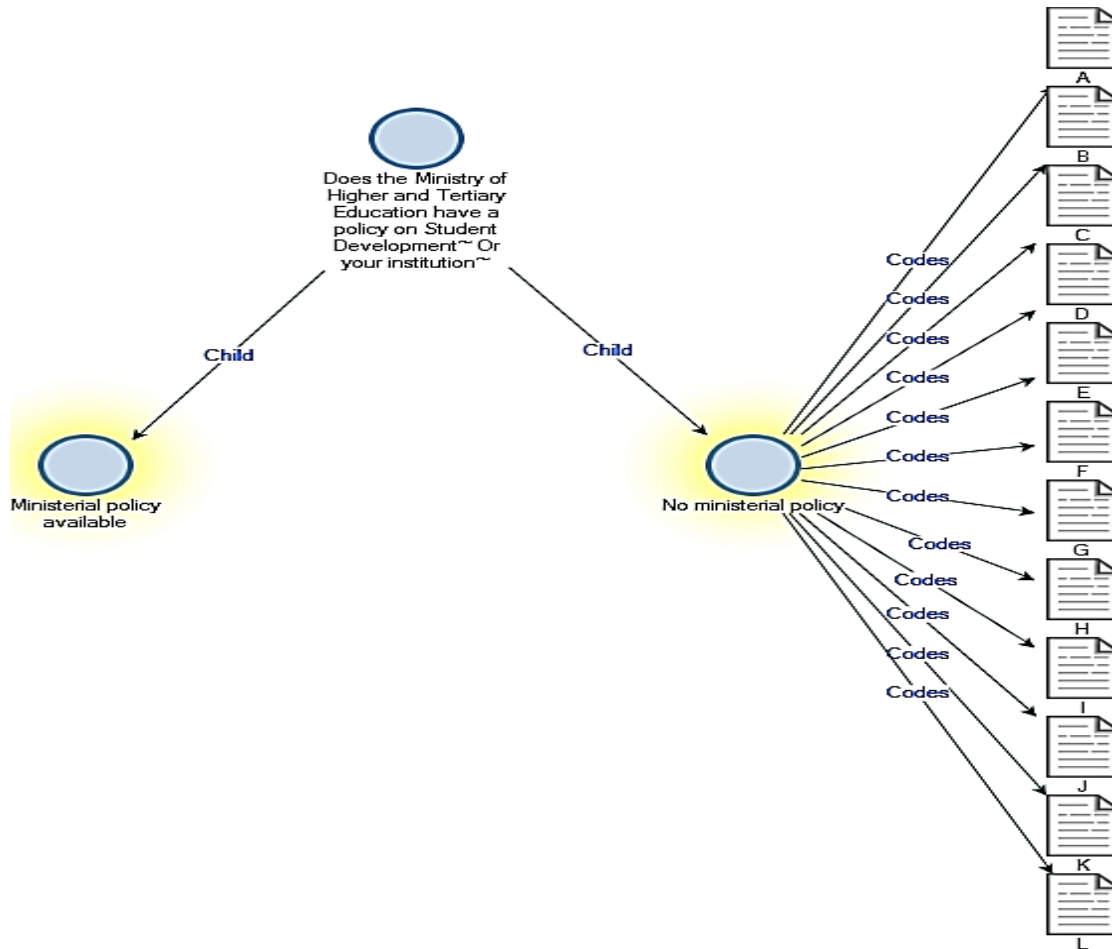
This call resonates well with Wallerstein's (2011) contention that the forced imposition of colonial languages created an impression that the mastery of these languages was a measure of being intelligent and successful. Therefore, to break free from this mental colonisation, there is need to mainstream local languages, cultures and epistemologies into student development programming.

### **6.8 Absence of Policies to Guide Student Development**

Student development is an area of epistemic and cultural contestation as has been highlighted in chapter five above. The debate is whose epistemologies, ontologies and cultural values should be deemed authoritative in student development programming. Due to coloniality Eurocentric patterns of power and systems of knowledge, Western epistemologies and ontologies have continued to exert hegemonic control on higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kerfoot, 2021). It is this enduring coloniality that now manifests in the form neo-liberal policies that have forced Sub-Saharan African countries to cut expenditure on higher education that has affected funding of student development programmes. The cut of state budgetary support to universities has opened another challenge on SD programmes as the shortage of funds has led to corporate organisations taking the funding of SD programmes in Zimbabwean universities which also accentuated other problems. Some of these problems could have been minimised if there were policies instituted by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD) or universities to guide SD programming. Such policies would outline the desired graduate attributes, pedagogies and the terms of reference for partnerships with external funders. The researcher thus asked SAPs on the existence of policies on SD and also applied documentary analysis on these documents.

The SAPs were initially asked if the MHTEISTD had a policy on SD. Their responses were classified into ministerial policy available and no ministerial policy codes. A comparative

diagram was extracted to show their responses. All of the SAPs indicated that no ministerial policy on was available in Zimbabwe.



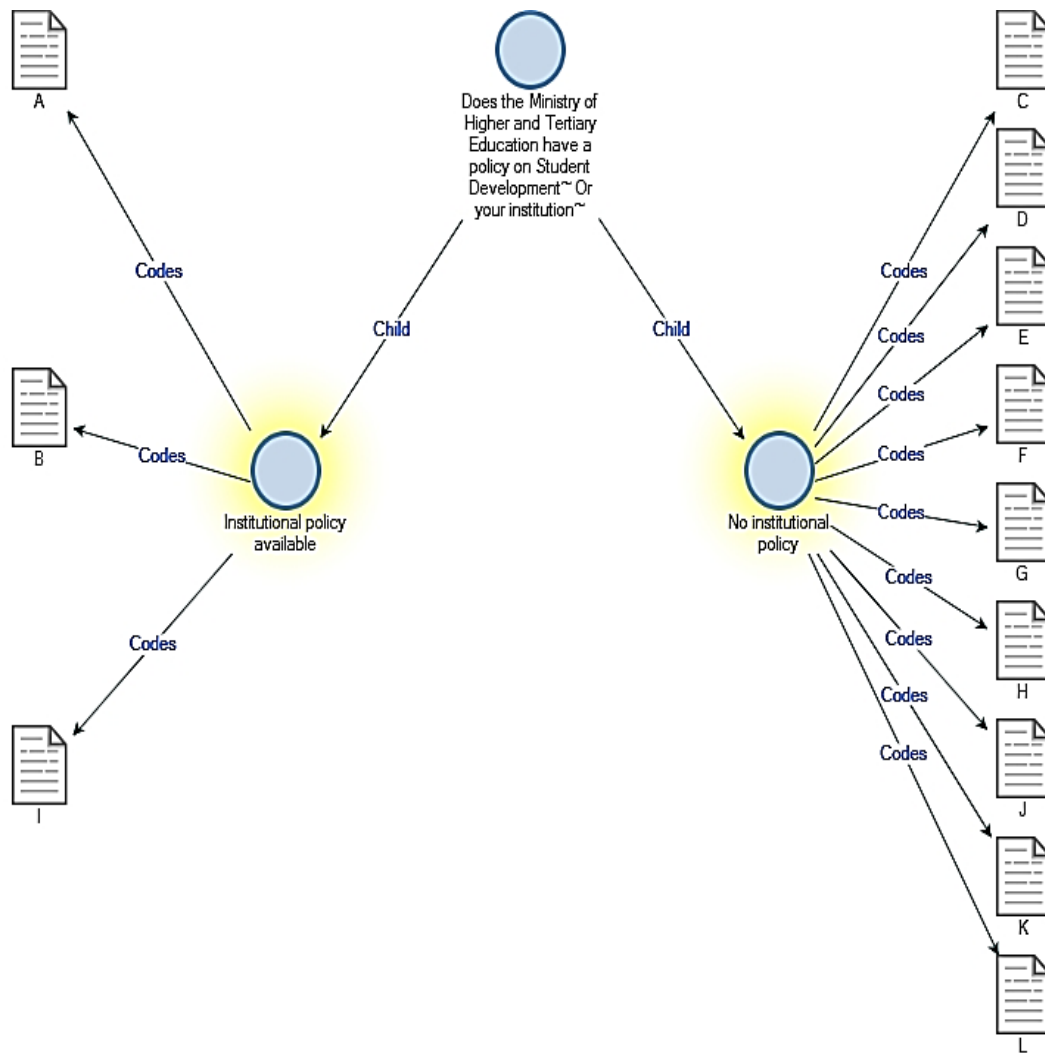
**Fig. 6.8: SAPs’ views on SD policies**

A word cloud of their verbatim responses was subsequently extracted, from which the main theme that emerged was that SAPs were not aware or did not know of the existence of either ministerial policy on SD.



**Fig. 6.9 Word on SD policies**

All the SAPs revealed they did not know if there existed a ministerial policy on SD. The word trees below are indicative of the responses of the SAPs. The SAPs were also asked if their institutions had policies on SD. Their responses were coded under the institutional policy available and no institutional policy codes. A comparison diagram fig 6.10 was subsequently extracted to show their responses to the enquiry.



**Fig. 6.10: Diagram on policy availability**

A word cloud of the majority of the SAPs who had indicated that no institutional policy on SD was available was extracted, and the main issue discussed had to do with documents.



**Fig. 6.11: Word cloud on university documents**

The word “documents” was discussed by four participants namely F, G, H and J SAPs four times who expressed that there were no clearly defined institutional policies on student development at their universities. They also indicate that institution guidelines on SD were immersed in several key documents of the university such as strategic plans and ordinances that govern student conduct and discipline. SAPs explained that they used these institutional as guidelines to SD programming.

Participant F explicated that:

At institutional level we do not have a specific policy on SD but it is embedded in other documents and structures in the University e.g. Ordinance number 2 tries to foster the moulding of a morally upright person.

Participant G also weighed in saying:

I am not aware of any ministerial policy on student development. At this institution we have no specific policy on SD, but some institutional documents emphasize on the need to develop a holistic graduate with hunhu/Ubuntu values.

In the same breadth Participant H confirmed that:

I am not aware of any Ministerial policies and at institutional level, we do not have a clearly defined and written policy. However, in other university documents such as the mission statements and ordinances on residence life there is emphasis on holistic development of the student with humane values such as integrity, togetherness.

Generally, SAPs are implementing SD in a context of policy vacuum save at one university where three SAPs from the institution indicated that there was a policy drawn at the institution to provide a frame to guide SD.

Only three SAPs highlighted that policies on SD were available at their institution, whilst the majority revealed that they had no SD policies at their institutions. Three SAP participants namely A, B and I who expressed that there was a written policy on SD at their institution were drawn the same university. This concurs with data from documents which were availed for analysis where only one of the three universities produced a written policy on SD. However, documentary analysis revealed that the documents only highlighted the clubs that were registered on campus and the requirements that were supposed to be met before a club was registered. The policy did not specify the graduate attributes or expected student outcomes. The policy was also silent on pedagogical guidelines and specific terms of engagement with external partners such as corporates and NGOs. This scenario gives space to external partners who fund some SD programmes to prioritise SD programmes that advance neo-liberal Eurocentric interests.

Lack of guidelines on pedagogy on SD has resulted in the marginalisation of African indigenous epistemologies, cultures and languages thus perpetuating epistemic injustices in SD. This has also led to SAPs and local elites prioritising SD programmes that advance the interests of coloniality. This development creates a huge stumbling block to decolonisation of SD in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa as it constructs narratives that continue to favour the West as the producer of the so-called universal SD theory. The myth that Eurocentric SD theory is universal needs to be demystified because it is not since it marginalises and invisibilises epistemologies from the South (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Santos, 2014; Suárez-Krabbe, 2009).

Therefore, it is important for the MHTEISTD and universities in Zimbabwe to provide policy imperatives that prioritise local languages, epistemologies and values in SD programming to stem enduring coloniality in higher education co-curriculum.

## **6.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter highlighted the challenges faced by SAPs in the struggle to decolonise SD programmes. These challenges, *inter-alia* included lack of funding, lack of space on the institutional timetable, paucity of literature by local authors and deficiency of skills on

decolonisation by SAPs. Failure to fund SD by universities exposes them to neo-colonial manipulation by corporate organisations that partner SAPs through funding some programmes especially those which advance the interests of coloniality. The non- provision of space for SD programmes on the timetable results in students not treating SD seriously. Lack of training in decolonisation strategies and non-availability of literature or theories on SD by African indigenous theorists was also cited as major challenges which lead to continued hegemony of Eurocentrism on student development. The marginalisation of indigenous languages poses a major threat to the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies in student development because decolonisation cannot be effectively executed using the languages of the imperial powers. The need for a policy framework to guide the planning and implementation of SD was highlighted as an important step in creating an enabling environment to mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies and policies. The next chapter highlights the discussion of findings.

# CHAPTER 7

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and synthesises the findings of the study. The chapter also highlights the contribution of the research to theory building in student development in higher education as well as submitting recommendations based on the findings. In synthesising the findings, the researcher presents a model on SD that is anchored on *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology. The overarching aim of this study was to explore approaches for decolonising student development in higher with the aim of creating favourable conditions for the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies of the Global South in SD. Recentring indigenous ways of knowing as valid sources of knowledge for student development epistemology conversely denotes the decentring the West as the only source of legitimate knowledge of SD. This study was also grounded on the need to contest the existing over-representation and dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies in SD theory. The research findings showed that epistemologies of the Global South are marginalised in the construction and legitimation of SD knowledge. In the context of Zimbabwean higher education there is need to prioritise *hunhu/ubuntu* values in SD theory building because they are culturally relevant to the local people. This is an important step of achieving sustainable community development in line with the United Nations Sustainable development goals. Sustainable community development cannot be achieved through uprooting people from their culture and ways of knowing. Therefore, this study advocates for a SD model that imbues African indigenous epistemologies, policies and languages. The next section recaps the study purpose and findings.

### 7.2 Recap of the research purpose and findings

The major objective of the study was to investigate whether SAPs were engaging in decolonial approaches by incorporating non-Eurocentric ways of knowing in designing SD programmes. Therefore, the research questions evolved around decentring Eurocentric epistemologies and the prioritisation of African indigenous knowledges into SD theory.

The research findings demonstrated that the impact of coloniality was enduring in SD practice. This led to a critical analysis of SD pedagogy and programmes that include orientation of first year students, clubs and societies, accommodation policies and the language of instruction. The findings revealed that coloniality of power, knowledge and being was pervasive in SD theory

and practice with a devastating impact on students' identity development. The existing Western template of SD socialises students into Eurocentric identities leading to students imitating Western hairstyles, speech tones, and skin complexion. The study findings demonstrated that Eurocentric theories formed the core of SD epistemology. This pointed to the hierarchisation of knowledges informing SD theory with non-Eurocentric ways of knowing being marginalised. This shows that SD is laden with a heavy baggage of coloniality hence there is need to decolonise it by imbuing African indigenous knowledges and policies.

Student development pedagogy has been used as tool for epistemic domination particularly the clubs such as Debate and Toastmasters which promote the notion of British middle-class culture and the English language. The study findings showed that this results in culturecides, linguicides and identicide. The findings of the research show that Eurocentric social identities are prevailing in SD programmes as evidenced by the thriving campus sub-culture of yellow bones, salads and nose brigades. This was confirmed by both SAPs and SRC student leaders interviewed for this study. The import of these findings is that the West cannot continue to claim monopoly of knowledge over SD theory. African indigenous knowledges should be duly recognised as authentic sources of SD theory.

The findings demonstrated that racism is implanted in SD theory because race was used to validate Eurocentric knowledge template for developing SD theory. This is so because race was used to categorise people into social hierarchies with the whites at top and the blacks at the lowest echelons of humanity. Therefore, decolonising SD epistemology is critical since it can create space for the rehumanization of the non-white peoples and recentring their epistemologies and ontologies that have been inferiorised and peripherised by Eurocentrism.

The main themes that emerged from the discussion of the above principles include the importance of embedding of African indigenous knowledges and values into the development and maturation of students into responsible adults with humane values. The study revealed that Eurocentrism is over-represented in SD theory and epistemologies from the Global South are marginalised.

The major theories of SD are by a few White men from the West and these theories are reproduced and presented globally as universal. The need to de-Westernise the geo-politics of SD emerged as an urgent necessity to delink SD epistemology from the racist ideology of Eurocentrism. The struggle to decolonise SD theory requires that the indigenous people of the Global South focus on the invisible epistemological empire which has invaded their mental



universe. The study exposed that coloniality is a matter of consciousness and it has invaded the minds of the indigenous peoples. Thus, decolonisation should focus delinking the mind sets of the indigenous from the trappings of coloniality and recentre African indigenous epistemologies, cultures, values and languages as legitimate sources of student development knowledge. This requires the cultivation of a decolonial attitude in SAPs who are the implementers of SD programmes. This entails retraining of SAPs in order to re-orient their minds from the Eurocentric ideals that have implanted into their minds by Western education.

The study also revealed the challenges that hinder the embedding of African knowledges, values and languages into SD which included lack of Afrocentric literature on SD theory and poor funding of student development programmes by universities. There is a serious paucity of research on SD theory and practice in Zimbabwean higher education hence the continued dependency on Eurocentric journals and scholarly works. While this study will partly address this problem, there is still need for local scholars to research more into this important discipline. The study also exposed the lack of a policy framework to provide national or even institutional imperatives to guide SD programming. The researcher is aware of the MHTEISTD's Education 5.0 which talks about heritage-based education as one of its policy guidelines. However, the noble concept is not clearly defined and articulated. There are several questions asked about what is meant by heritage-based education. Does it imply the use of Zimbabwe's natural resources for national development? Or does it refer to the recentring of African traditional culture, values and epistemologies as sources of curriculum reform? There is need to clarify on these ambiguities inherent in the policy for it to be appreciated and implemented in a manner that enables the achievement of its objectives.

The other major challenges that were highlighted in the findings included lack of space on the institutional timetable leaving most of the SD programmes to be done informally after the students have finished doing academic work. Orientation of first year students is the only SD activity that is given prominence and a full week is allocated to this activity. All other activities are done outside the official timetable.

As indicated in Chapter 5, students tend to shun away from curricular activities that are not examined like SD which is very important in equipping students with lifelong skills. Therefore, the need for university administrators to afford SD status in official time allocation cannot be over-emphasised. This will have a positive bearing on the endeavour to mainstream indigenous epistemologies into SD.

In summary, this study explored the embedding of African indigenous ways of knowing, values, cultures and languages into SD. The hegemony of Eurocentric epistemologies in SD theory has created a situation where cultural and identity consciousness, leadership training and the acquisition of critical life skill tend to be conceptualised from a Eurocentric lens. This approach diminishes opportunities for the incorporation of African indigenous epistemologies into SD theory and praxis. To reverse this process, this research amplifies calls for the reinvigoration of efforts to mainstream indigenous knowledges into SD by reclaiming hunhu/ubuntu values into SD epistemology.

### **7.3 Limitations of existing studies**

The literature review process on the research problem has established that in the context of Zimbabwean higher education very few studies have focussed on decolonising SD. In the same perspective no studies have engaged the possibility of the incorporation of African indigenous knowledges into SD programming. Fewer studies especially by Madambi and Mangena (2016) that are available have tended to focus on raising awareness on the part of the university management to the need for the recognition of the importance of the Student Affairs Departments which are treated as ancillary and not as core component of university. The same study by Madambi and Mangena (2016) has also amplified calls for the development of a meta-normative framework for student affairs management. Research focussing on decolonisation of student development theory and the centring of African indigenous epistemologies is lacking. Hence this study attempted to contribute new knowledge and pedagogical approach to student development practice in order to fill this gap.

This study was anchored on the theoretical premise of decoloniality, which is advocating for the decolonisation of student development epistemology. This is because of coloniality which is pervasive in campus cultures in higher education which endorses the conceptualisation of student development theory and practice from the Western lens which presents Eurocentric epistemology as universal.

This view perpetuates the invisibilisation and inferiorisation of other epistemologies especially African indigenous knowledges. Decoloniality advocates for the recognition of the existence of different ways of knowing and various cultures in a poly-epistemic world. This approach calls for the appreciation that Eurocentrism is just one of the numerous ways of knowing amongst other diverse epistemologies that contribute to knowledge production. This also

implies that student development epistemology needs to be informed by diverse knowledges and cultures co-existing in a complimentary and not competitive manner.

It is on the basis of recognising that people live in diverse cultural and ecological environments which influence their beliefs and knowledge systems that this study advocates for the mainstreaming of African indigenous epistemologies into student development practice. This view influenced the theoretical and methodology approach to this research. The following section presents the relationship of this study to other studies on decolonisation of higher education in general, decolonisation of the university and epistemic freedom from Eurocentrism.

#### **7.4 Relationship of the research with previous studies on decolonising higher education**

Some findings of this study are consistent with previous studies as those focussing on decolonising the university and the *#MustFall Movement* in South Africa. Whilst there is scarcity of research on decolonising student development, the theoretical framework guiding this study is linked to other studies in the context of decoloniality in Africa and other countries in the Global South. In the context of decolonising the university and the *#MustFall Movement* in South, scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1992), Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), Mbembe (2016), Mamdani (2016) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) to mention just but a few have brought to the fore the impact of coloniality on university culture, curriculum and operations. These theorists have called for a metaphysical decolonisation leading to epistemic freedom which promotes indigenous epistemologies, cultures and languages in university education.

In the purview of Mbembe (2016a), the call to decolonise the university is justified in order to deracialise and de-Westernise it from being a local outpost of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon. The Eurocentric epistemic model attributes knowledge construction validity only to the Western epistemologies and it marginalises epistemic traditions of the Global South. This perspective is sync with findings of this research which indicate that SD epistemology is elitist and gives privilege to Western ways of knowing by inferiorising local indigenous epistemologies.

In the same vein, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, 2020) advocates for the deprovincialisation of Africa to redress the marginalisation and peripheralisation of African indigenous epistemologies in the domain of knowledge production. This position dovetails well with the findings of this thesis that Eurocentrism is an enabler of Western epistemic hegemony on student development

theory. Hence the need to address the problem of coloniality in student development epistemology by mainstreaming African indigenous knowledges in student development programmes. This thesis also agrees with Ngugi (1992) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) on the need to confront globalisation which talks of a global knowledge economy with its centre in the Global North from which it cascades to the Global South. This research amplifies the call by these two decolonial scholars for the re-centring of African indigenous knowledges in theory development an important step in decolonising the university. Ngugi (1992) calls for the rejection of the assumption that the West is the fulcrum of Africa' identity consciousness and cultural heritage proposes curricular reforms that prioritise the teaching of African languages and cultures alongside those from other continents. Ngugi's (1992) proposal fits well with Santos' (2014) propagation for a pluriversity in the process of knowledge production and validation. This study concurs with this view and its findings revealed that student development theory is founded on a Eurocentric epistemology that is presumed to be universal. A pluriversal epistemology is one that is anchored on a process of knowledge production that is open to epistemic diversity (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nisancioglu, 2018; Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2009). This study amplifies the call for epistemic pluriversalism by mainstreaming indigenous African knowledges and cultural values in student development.

Finally, this study dovetails with Tuhiwai-Smith's (1999) perspective that critiques the dominant research methodologies for being overloaded with Eurocentric epistemologies. The research supports her appeals for the decolonisation of research methodologies particularly among the indigenous people by giving space to their languages, knowledges, cultural values and social practices. This research advocates for the mainstreaming of African indigenous knowledges as well as cultural and social practices into student development practice. Whilst there are elements of this study that are consistent with other decolonial studies, the focus on embedding *hunhu/ubuntu* values into student development theory enriched its uniqueness and thus enhanced its originality.

## **7.5 Contribution of the research to Knowledge production**

The overarching objective of this study was to a contribution to knowledge production by extending knowledge frontiers in student development theory by producing a decolonial model that imbues *hunhu/ubuntu* values.

### **7.5.1 Contribution to student development pedagogy**

Respondents in this study, namely SAPs and student leaders were positioned to take part as active participants and not simply as objects of the research. There, the research adopted interactive participatory methods of data collection such as in-depth interviews with SAPs and focus group discussions with Student leaders. These methods created space for sharing experiences between the researcher and the participants. The research revealed the significance of decolonial theoretical framework for research aiming at embedding African indigenous knowledges and social practices in student development theory and pedagogy. The approach unravelled the pervasive coloniality of knowledge, language and culture that resulted in the marginalisation of indigenous ways of knowing, beliefs and social practices in student development. The decolonial approach unmasked the invisible hand of Eurocentrism in student development practice that continues to invade the mental universe of the students leading to identicides, linguicides and valuecides. The yellow bones, salads and nose brigades attest to the detrimental impact of Eurocentric hegemony on students' psyche. The study amplified the significance of incorporating indigenous epistemologies and cultures into student development theory thereby affording the normally silenced indigenous knowledges space to be heard.

### **7.5.2 Theoretical Contribution**

The study employed decolonial theoretical framework that provided space to the African indigenous epistemologies that are normally peripherised in knowledge production and validation. Decolonial ideas of African scholars and others from the Global South were paramount in providing the theoretical framework of this research. Decoloniality promotes the need for a metaphysical decolonisation of African minds which continue to be colonised by a Western invisible episteme called coloniality. Decoloniality questions the absence of the knowledges, cultures and languages of indigenous people in student development theory. It also calls for the decolonisation of Eurocentrism which is pervasive in the curriculum and institutional cultures of African higher education. This research reinvigorated the use of *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology in student development practice.

### 7.5.3 Contribution to National Development Strategy (NDS) 1

This thesis fits well into the Zimbabwean Government's National Development Strategy 1 vision of increasing access to quality, equitable and inclusive education. The researcher explicates that quality education cannot be attained when the higher education system continues to rely on European modes and models of education. The thesis indicated that Eurocentric epistemologies, languages and cultures are over-represented in student development hence the need to decolonise it by prioritising African epistemologies to decentre the Western hegemony inherent in it. To achieve equity and inclusivity in post-colonial in higher education, there is need to promote the use of African indigenous epistemologies, languages and cultural in the curriculum. This resonates well with Chapter 8, Article 643 of the National Development Strategy 1 which stipulates that there should be deliberate efforts to increase the use of indigenous languages in the curriculum process.

The research also contributes to the attainment national policy imperatives like the National Development Strategy 1 through the development of a home-grown student development model, the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot model which imbues indigenous *hunhu/ubuntu* values. The model will be explained in detail below. This will ensure that there is equity and inclusivity in the representation of epistemologies, languages and cultural values in the curriculum. The use of indigenous languages and values through song and dance as envisaged in the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model of student development will enhance identity consciousness. This can help undo the negative effects of Eurocentric student development such as the production of youths who are psyched to emulate Whites in skin colour, hairstyles and speech tones e.g. the so-called 'yellow bones', 'salads' and 'nose brigades'. The utility value of this study is that it will answer the call in the National Development Strategy 1 for the production of effective strategies to promote the use of indigenous languages, cultural heritage and knowledges to enhance national identity and patriotism.

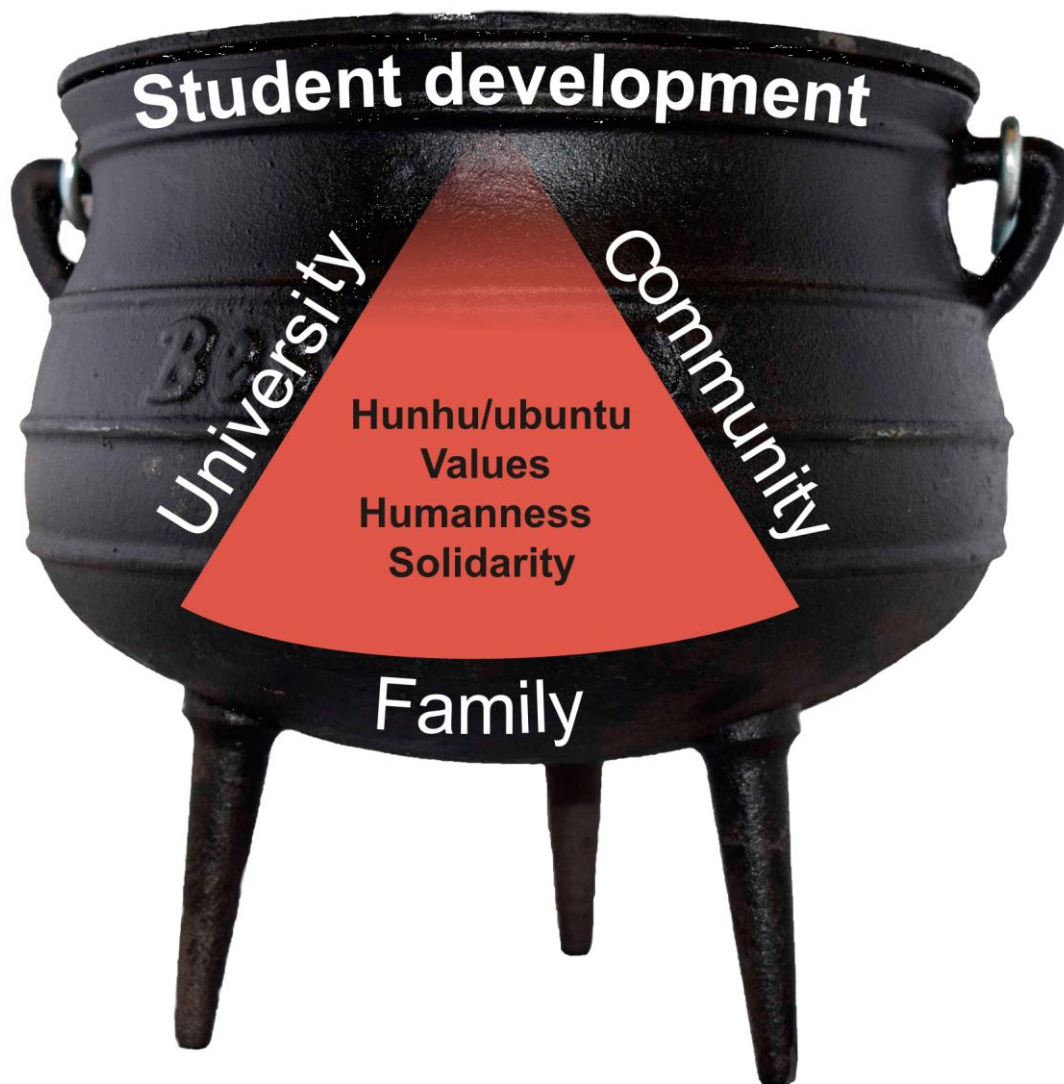
#### 7.5.4 Contribution to Education 5.0

Education 5.0 is anchored on five pillars namely teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation. Traditionally university education was founded on the first three pillars i.e. teaching, research and community service. In a bid to leverage higher education as the fulcrum of industrialisation of the economy for national development the Second Republic through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development added the other two pillars that is innovation and industrialisation. The core theme under the Education 5.0 mantra is that university education should lead to the production of goods and services. In fulfilment of this ministerial policy imperative this study developed the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model student development model which is anchored on *hunhu/ubuntu* values. This study was undertaken as an exploration into ways of embedding the ways of knowing, beliefs and social practices of the indigenous Bantu people into student development practice. The researcher is a student affairs practitioner at one of the case universities and has intimate experience of student development practice at the other two case institutions. As the researcher explained in Chapter 4 on the justification for the use of grounded theory as the methodology of this study it is this experience that motivated the researcher to adopt a decolonial theoretical framework in order to develop a decolonial model of student development. This resulted in the development of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Student Development Model imbues *hunhu/ ubuntu* values of the local Bantu people.

*Hunhu/Ubuntu* is the philosophy that shapes the ontology and epistemology of the Shona, Ndebele as well as other Bantu people of Zimbabwe and other Sub-Saharan African countries and it is considered to be the foundation of a person's identity among these indigenous African people. According to Mapara (2013) *hunhu/ubuntu* is a moral ethic whose values are passed from one generation to the other through socialisation and enculturation first by the family and by community members. The *hunhu/ubuntu* is a set of beliefs and values that guide the manner in which a person conducts him or herself in relation to other people and the environment (Malunga, 2006; Gade, 2011; Mapara, 2013; Metz, 2014 Madambi & Mangena, 2016). It engenders an ethos that influences the peoples' day to day way of life and shapes their behavioural patterns and sets the bounds on which a person can be qualified as being human.

Therefore, *hunhu/ubuntu* forms the essence of personhood that is gained and maintained through the person's communally acceptable actions and social relations. Thus, the individual

and the community are entwined and a person's identity is conjoined with that of the society. In this context the individual is accountable to the community and is deemed to be a good person if he or she fulfils the community's notion of a moral upright person. Imbuing *hunhu/ubuntu* values into student development is essential as this would make the student strive to be at his or her best in terms of behaviour and academic performance.



**Fig. 7.1: The Social Enculturation / Three-legged Pot Model**

The model resembles a three-legged pot which is usually found at each household in a traditional African family in Zimbabwe. The pot is big enough to feed a large gathering and would usually be used on family gatherings or village functions such as *nhimbe* (co-operative work village gatherings) or funerals. At such functions family members or villagers bring some food item that will be cooked and shared amongst those present. It symbolises solidarity,



humanness and cohesion in the family or at village level. The pot rests on three legs for balance and as a sign of wholeness. It cannot stand on one or two legs as it would lose its balance and collapse and no cooking would take place. The three-legged pot symbol resonates well with the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot model which advocates for three pillars of student enculturation, growth and maturation to work together to achieve a holistic student development. Holinism calls for the acknowledgement that traditional African epistemologies are valid and reliable sources of knowledge (Sefa Dei, 2013). Current student development as highlighted in chapter two are founded on Eurocentric epistemology that marginalises Afrocentric epistemologies as sources of student development knowledge.

The model advocates for collaboration among the three pillars of student enculturation and learning namely the family, the community and the university. Just as the pot cannot stand on one or two legs, the university cannot successfully produce holistic graduates on its own with the co-operation of the other two. Holistic development implies completeness and well-rounded growth and maturation. This cannot be attained under the current scenario where the university and corporates take centre stage while the parents and the community where students come from are marginalised. It would be like the three-legged pot is standing on one and half legs. There is no balance and the pot will collapse and in the case of student development its goals will not be attained since the other pillars and their values and knowledges are marginalised and silenced. The United Nations Sustainable Development goal number eight calls for the provision of quality education. This cannot be achieved if the knowledges of the Global South are peripherised in knowledge construction and validation. Thus, the three-legged pot model strives to enhance the achievement of this millennium development goal by providing a paradigm of student development that imbues indigenous ways of knowing.

This model is anchored on *hunhu/ubuntu* a Bantu epistemology of human development which is passed on to members of society through active enculturation and socialisation. In the traditional Bantu society, the family and society were central transmitters of values and identity development consciousness. There were no formal schools and the young learnt through observing and participating in family and communal activities under the mentorship of elders in the family and community. Such active participation and observation moulded the young into a well-rounded *munhu/umuntu* or person with *hunhu/ubuntu* values. A person acculturated and socialised with *hunhu/ubuntu* values was well-rounded, respectable and an upright person.

Being cultured into *hunhu/ubuntu* values was a form of identity, because person who had not been acculturated and socialised in the values of *hunhu/ubuntu* was not considered as a *munhu/umuntu*. For example, foreigners such as whites would not be considered as *vanhu/abantu* or human beings in the moral and social sense of the word because they had not been cultured in *hunhu/ubuntu*.

*Hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology is founded on virtues such as humanness, mutuality, humility, respect, integrity and solidarity. Humanness is the core value of *hunhu/ubuntu* ethic and it embodies the idea that a person is a person through and because of other people. This value is anchored on the spirit of sharing, hospitality, caring, respect and the community members' responsiveness to one another. These actions ensure peaceful co-existence and harmony in the society. As a result, individuals are moulded into confident persons who have a consciousness that their conduct has a bearing on the dignity of other community members. These values are important pillars that create empathetic and respectful human relationships in the society. This is the main objective of student development in higher education; hence *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy has the potential to play a transformative role as the guiding concept guiding its theory.

This model is relevant to local student development practice and other Sub-Saharan African countries because it imbues *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology which has stood the test of time as it has survived the onslaught of Eurocentrism against indigenous cultures and knowledges. The model is responsive to the context of the local indigenous people as well as to the global imperatives and its use would result in the production of well-rounded graduates who are grounded in their indigenous as well as global ways of knowing.

The Social Enculturation/Three-Legged pot model enables a clear expression of indigenous epistemologies in student development programming through the embodiment of indigenous languages, stories and cultural practices that can be expressed through drama, poetry, song and dance. This model of student development programming gives prominence to the marginalised experiences and ways of knowing of indigenous people, while at the same time it acknowledges that students live in a poly-epistemic global environment. It does not advocate for a return to pre-colonial lifestyles and cultural environment but it calls for the recognition of the important role that indigenous African epistemologies, values and languages play to the achievement of sustainable community development.

## **7.6 Main tenets of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model**

The Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot model is founded on the principle that student development is shared responsibility among the three institutions that are responsible for student socialisation, learning and maturation namely; the family, the society and the university.

The three institutions substantially contribute to the education, growth and maturation of the student to be a responsible and a morally upright person. To attain the object of holistic development of the student, the three institutions should operate in unison, failure of which could lead to the production of what Eddy and Murphy (2000) describe as academic zombies that is, students who graduate with a paper degree but are social misfits. Such students fail to ingratiate themselves with the expected conduct in the community. Further, the SAPs should strive to involve the parent in their planning of student development programmes such as orientation of first year students so that they get to know the accurate student cultural and socio-economic background and this information will be helpful in the planning of student development activities. Currently, most universities in Zimbabwe do not involve parents in the education of the student basing on the Western elitist model that considers under graduate students as independent and mature adults. Yet in reality these students depend on their parents for tuition and for their upkeep. The Social Enculturation/ Three-Legged Pot Model will ensure that the voice of the parent or guardian is heard in student development issues. Most parents bring up their children in the context of *hunhu/ubuntu* values. Therefore, involving students in student development programming will be one of the ways of ensuring that these values are included in the student development on and off campus activities.

The first two pillars of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Model are the family and society which are also the primary sources of socialisation and enculturation of the student therefore; SAPs should find a way of embedding the student's cultural background into student development programmes. A day for engaging the parents may be set aside during the orientation week or the SAPs may leverage the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook among other platforms to reach out to parents and guardians of the student.

The notion that university students are mature and independent is Eurocentric and alien to the *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy that guides life orientation of most local people. Under *hunhu/ubuntu* a person is never considered independent of his /her family and community because

*hunhu/ubuntu* is a way of life in which the essence of being human is attained and maintained through a person's connectedness to others.

The third pillar of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model is the university which is also the secondary source of socialisation and enculturation of the student. However, the university is a Western in outlook and at most it acculturates the Eurocentric values into the student while the student's cultural values are inferiorised and 'othered'. This research has shown that this approach has detrimental consequences to the student's mind, psyche and identity consciousness. Hence the need to decolonise student development epistemology and programming through mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies, values and languages.

In operationalizing the model, SAPs would need to adopt a revolutionary approach to student development programming which include:

- i) Using indigenous languages in student development activities. The current pedagogical approach marginalises the use of indigenous languages while the use of Eurocentric languages and speech tones is glorified as a sign of status and achievement. This has resulted in linguicides and in most cases linguistic famine a situation which has been described by Ngugi (1986) as cases where indigenous people have been denied the opportunity to speak and develop their languages. To make it more appealing to students this may be done through some form of edutainment i.e., education and entertainment. Poetry, song and dance may be used.
- ii) Community leaders who have deep knowledge of cultural heritage may be partnered with so that they are used as epistemic resource persons in imparting *hunhu/ubuntu* values in the same way corporate leaders are partnering student affairs practitioners in leadership and entrepreneurship training.
- iii) Introduction of rural attachment where student would be required to spend at least a week in rural areas where they will engage in civic engagement activities during semester break periods to acquaint themselves with different cultural and lifelong competencies

Among the Bantu people, there is an idiom which says "*it takes a village to raise a child.*" Therefore, the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model will require that SAPs work with the traditional and corporate as well as NGO leaders in equipping the students with a variety

of lifelong skills while at the same time creating a conducive environment to mainstream indigenous African ways of knowing, practices and policies into student development.

### **7.7 Marketing of the Model**

The researcher will market the model to enhance its utility value by engaging the implementers of student development programmes namely Deans of Students and other student affairs practitioners through the Deans of Student Affairs Forum (DOSAF). The forum is a platform where Deans of Students from various state funded and private universities meet either physically or virtually to share experiences on student development and support issues. The researcher will provide Deans of Students with soft copies of the model, which they easily share with their colleagues at their universities.

The researcher is also active on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. Thus, the researcher will exploit these social media platforms to reach a wider regional and international audience. The researcher is also active on academic online platforms such as Academia and Research Gate and will upload the thesis on these platforms to reach out to academia. The thesis will also be availed on the institutional repository of the case universities as a requirement which was attached to the granting of permission to collect data for the research at these institutions. Further, the researcher will also avail a copy of the thesis to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development and it will likely influence policy making on student development. The researcher will also share the thesis with stakeholders who partner the Student Affairs department at his institution such as Star Leadership and International Coaching and Mentoring. At institutional level, the researcher will share the model with colleagues in student development and map out on strategies to implement it and some of the recommendations of the research. Finally, the researcher intends to organise a conference on student development in collaboration with partners in student development and the Deans of Students Affairs Forum where the findings of this study could be shared.

### **7.8 Chapter summary**

The chapter synthesised the findings of the study which evolved mainly on prioritisation of the African indigenous epistemologies and policies into student development theory in university education. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* epistemology was identified as the ideal source of knowledge for the crafting of Afrocentric student development theory. The Social Enculturation/Three-

Legged Pot Model which imbues *hunhu/ubuntu* values was recommended as an ideal strategy to mainstream indigenous ways of knowing, cultures and languages into student development. The Model also fits well into the requirements of Education 5.0 and National Development Strategy 1 goals of producing goods and services using national cultural heritage.

The next chapter concludes the thesis and provides recommendations to enhance the promotion of African indigenous cultures, languages and ways of knowing as valid sources of student development theory.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Introduction

This study emerged from the observation that although decolonial theory has the potential to stem coloniality that is pervasive in student development theory and practice literature on student development lacked studies on how decoloniality could be employed in Zimbabwean higher education. Hence the main assumption underpinning this study is the significance of a decolonial approach in student development pedagogy in Zimbabwean universities. The study has demonstrated that SAPs as the frontline student development implementers are still to embrace decolonial pedagogical approaches in their practice. The data collection methods that were employed namely, in-depth interviews with SAPs, focus group discussions with the Student Representative Council members and documentary analysis, provided significant insights on the pedagogical practices of the SAPs in designing and implantation of student development programmes. In the following sections the researcher will share his reflections on insights derived from carrying out this research. The chapter will conclude with the author providing possible areas for future research into the decolonisation of student development and recommendations.

The thesis's main contribution is the development of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model of student development emerging from the interpretation of the meaning of the research as recommended by Charmaz (2017) a leading scholar in Grounded Theory methodology. The model is grounded on the ideas of the SAPs and Student Representative Council members as well as from the analysis of documents. The interpretation of the meaning of the research was endeavoured in the context of the decolonial theory on which the theoretical framework of the study was underpinned. The need to re-centre indigenous epistemologies in student development epistemology and pedagogy was the driving factor in the conceptualisation of the Social Enculturation Model which is underpinned by the immanent *hunhu/ubuntu* values.

The research findings demonstrate that the pedagogical practices in the implementation of student development programmes were not yet consciously embedding a decolonial approach. This was attributed to their educational and professional training which did not expose them to

decolonial approaches and the entanglement of coloniality and neo-liberalism not only on student development but on the whole higher education field.

Further, of all the twelve SAPs only one had qualification in student development. Most of them trained as teachers and were not exposed to decolonial theory and the need to decolonise the curriculum. This is mainly because in Zimbabwe, serious questions about curricular reform gained currency after the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999. However, the recommendations of the Commission took long to be implemented. In the meantime, attempts to reform the curriculum ended up being an exercise in futility with just tinkering on its margins without seriously interrogating on its Eurocentricity. This has contributed to the SAPs' pedagogical shortcomings in decolonial theory and praxis.

The field of student development has been a contested space since its commencement. The contestations have resulted in the emergence and incorporation into student development the cultural relativist and feminist critiques that have been delineated in detail in chapter three. The decolonial critique that interrogates the presentation of student development epistemology as a universal epistemology has gained currency in recent years. These contestations have exposed the myth of the assumption that student development epistemology is universal. The findings presented in this thesis justify and amplify the calls for a pluriversal epistemology of student development.

Another theme that emerged from the research results is the prevalence of hierarchies of student development knowledge. These hierarchies of student development epistemologies have resulted in the marginalisation and even Invisibilisation of African indigenous ways of knowing, languages and values. Allusion to *hunhu/ubuntu* by SAPs and the student leaders as well as from the documents points to attempts to create space that promotes the development of a decolonial epistemology in student development practice. Therefore, student development practitioners, including student peer educators may need to be re-oriented so as to improve their capacity to recognise ways in which Eurocentrism has been implanted into student development knowledge and also expose the veiled Eurocentric hegemony through claims of universalism in an attempt to maintain coloniality of power, knowledge and being.

The mainstreaming of African indigenous knowledges into student development epistemology would facilitate the attainment of the key existential purpose of student development in higher education, which to facilitate transformation and social change in students. Student transformation in the African context cannot be achieved by sole dependence on Eurocentric



student development epistemology while indigenous epistemologies continue to be inferiorised and ‘othered’. The aim of student development cannot be attained through its current iteration; therefore, it needs to undergo decolonisation to create conditions which are amenable to the inclusion of African ways of knowing, histories and traditions. To achieve progress in mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies, there is need to address barriers that have been erected by Eurocentrism. In chapter 7 the researcher highlighted several challenges that act as barriers to the embedding of African indigenous knowledges, cultures and languages into student development practice in higher education. Reskilling of SAPs and training of peer educators who play a significant role in student development is key to mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies.

## **8.2 The researcher’s reflections as a student and researcher in carrying out the study**

This section recounts the journey travelled by the researcher in carrying out this study so as to provide clues to other novice researchers in the field of student development and decolonisation in higher education. In order to ensure clarity in this endeavour the researcher will for the first time use the first-person pronoun ‘I’.

Initially I struggled with the idea of what decolonisation entailed since most African countries gained political freedom several decades ago, and Zimbabwe, the case country, some forty years ago. Therefore, such question as what does it mean to decolonise student development arose. The other pertinent question was is it possible to mainstream indigenous African epistemologies into student development especially in Zimbabwe where recommendations of the Nziramasanga Commission into Education and Training which specified the need to decolonise the curriculum from Eurocentrism took so long to be considered. As I grappled with these questions it became clear that languages, cultures, traditions, values and voices of the indigenous African people should be given precedence in student development epistemology. The next question was how the mainstreaming of indigenous epistemologies and policies into student development was going to be done.

Two issues brought clarity to these questions namely, the Joshua Nkomo Memorial Lecture that was held at Midlands State University on 17 May 2019 and the first face to face interaction with my main supervisor. The main presenter at the Joshua Nkomo Memorial Lecture was Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, a Zimbabwean historian and decolonial scholar. His exposition on decoloniality and epistemic freedom in Africa cleared a lot of ambiguities on coloniality of power, knowledge and being. After the presentation I had the opportunity to meet him and we

exchanged contacts and I began to follow him on Twitter and on Academia. This opened several avenues on the subject of decolonisation and I got connected to other African and Global South decolonial thinkers' works such as Mamdani, Mbembe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mignolo, Maldonado-Torres, Grosfoguel and Tuhiwai-Smith to mention just a few. My interaction with their works brought more lucidity on how the process of decolonisation could create conditions that are favourable to the mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges, languages, values and traditions into the student development epistemology. Secondly, the works of my main supervisor Professor Jacob Mapara on indigenous knowledge systems as sources of material for curricular reform helped me to map the pedagogical approach to the mainstreaming of *hunhu/ubuntu* values into student development practice.

As a researcher I intend to engage in further research on the strategies that can be used to embed indigenous people's beliefs and practices into student development theory and practice. Further studies need to be carried out on strategies to involve elders from the local communities who could be used as the epistemic authorities and resource persons on indigenous knowledges and beliefs. Currently student development relies solely on corporate leaders as the resource persons due to the colonial outlook of the programmes.

The following section presents some of the suggested for future research to extend knowledge frontiers in student development theory and practice.

### **8.3 Areas for future research**

Though few scholars have written on the need to reconstruct student development epistemology, for example, Madambi and Mangena (2016) this research is possibly the first to provide a pedagogical approach to mainstream African indigenous epistemologies into student development epistemology and practice. Therefore, further research is recommended in order to extend knowledge and understanding on student development in higher education from the perspective of indigenous knowledges, beliefs and practices.

Further, additional research may cast more light on challenges faced by individual SAPs or institutions in the struggle for epistemic freedom in student development practice. Such research can lead to the creation of decolonial student development programming based on African indigenous and other ways of knowing from the Global South.

## 8.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

- i) At macro level, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development or the universities at micro-level need to develop policies that guide student development practice to ensure that that it is aligned to the thrust of the National Development Strategy 1 that outlines the need to prioritise indigenous cultural heritage, knowledges and languages in education.
- ii) Retraining of student development practitioners on decolonial pedagogical approaches in student development programming.
- iii) Universities to provide reasonable funding for student development programmes to limit dependency on neo-liberal corporates who end up dictating the types of programmes that are implemented at the universities.
- iv) Student development practitioners to engage local community leaders to impart students on the tenets of *hunhu/ubuntu* and other cultural heritage practices.
- v) Introduce practical rural attachment for students just like what they do with industrial attachment to enhance students' appreciation of different cultures of the people of Zimbabwe.

## 8.5 Conclusion

Mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies and policies implies the developing of a strong decolonial analysis of student development that interrogates how Eurocentrism sustained by colonialism and colonality has led to a student development epistemology that excludes, marginalises and invisibilises voices of the indigenous peoples of the Global South and their ways of knowing. The process of embedding indigenous cultures, knowledges, values and beliefs provides a significant step towards the process of decolonisation of the institutional cultures in higher education in the Global South.

The multi-case study design that was used anchored on constructivist grounded theory methodology has contributed to the extending knowledge on decolonisation of student development by analysing whether student development practitioners were engaging in the principles of decolonial theory. The findings indicated that in some cases student affairs practitioners were incorporating elements of indigenous *hunhu/ ubuntu* values and at one case university a decolonial pedagogical approach was slowly emerging. Further, the research

revealed a string of multi-faceted challenges faced by student development practitioners, and there is need to address these problems which impede the embedding of indigenous epistemologies and policies into student development in Zimbabwean higher education. The development of the Social Enculturation/Three-Legged Pot Model anchored on *hunhu/ubuntu* values provides a sound pedagogical framework to guide the process of mainstreaming indigenous epistemologies of the local people of the Global South into student development theory. However, the need for the development of a policy framework to guide student development at both institutional and national level cannot be over-emphasised if the struggle for epistemic freedom and cognitive justice against coloniality is to be won. This calls for African and other scholars from the Global South to collaborate and rise to the challenge of the need for the production of studies and publications to inform the development an Afro-centric student development epistemology.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER**

ANNEX 19 Form GRSD 17

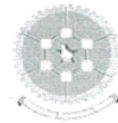
CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Student Name MARODZE CRISPEN

Student number C18134117 L

Programme DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved research title  
MAINSTREAMING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN EPISTEMOLOGIES INTO  
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at Chinhoyi University of Technology for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University Policies and guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached outlined by the Research Ethics Committee of the University. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal. May you please assist the student in any way possible.

The main objective of the research is to  
TO FULFIL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE  
HE IS DOING WITH THE INSTITUTE OF LIFELONG LEARNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

Best Regards

Joseph E. Z. Matouanika  
Name  
Chairperson of School's/Institute's Higher Degrees Committee

Tel: +263 .....  
E-mail: .....



Date

## APPENDIX B: SELF INTRODUCTORY LETTER

CHINHUYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



### CHINHUYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

✉: P. Bag 7724 ☎: 263-67-22203-5

To Participant

**Re: Request to participate in my Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) research**

I, **CRISPEN MAZODZE**, of Chinhoyi University of Technology would like to kindly request you to volunteer as a participant in my PhD study. The title of my thesis is **Mainstreaming Indigenous African Epistemologies into Student Development in Higher Education**. I am a PhD student at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT). I am undertaking this research as part of my dissertation. You are selected as a particularly suitable participant for my research due to your experience in this domain and your position within Student Affairs in your university.

**Purpose of Research:** The aim of my research is to explore mainstreaming of indigenous African epistemologies and policies into student development in four state universities in Zimbabwe. More specifically, the research aims to illuminate how Student Affairs practitioners can contribute to epistemic decoloniality in student development in higher education.

**Procedure** If you agree to be a participant in my research, I will interview you and record this interview digitally. It should take you between one (1) and two (hours) to participate in the focus group interview and about one (1) hour to participate in the individual interviews. By signing this form you are agreeing to have your interview recorded. You are welcome to review the interview transcripts shortly after the interview and I would like to possibly conduct a second interview to provide an opportunity for you to review the themes if you wish. I would like to incorporate your feedback in my discussion and in this way hope to provide an accurate reflection of the data collected from you as participant.

**Participation** I would like to invite you to participate on a free and voluntary basis. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any stage in the process with impunity.

**Confidentiality** Any information that is obtained through our interview will be analysed by myself only. In that way I can assure you of confidentiality. I will encode your name into 'participant 1' and in that way will ensure that your identity is not associated with the data extracted from the interview. In this way I can assure you of anonymity.

I very much appreciate you considering my request

Yours Sincerely

.....

Crispen Mazodze

Date

CUT Cell: +263 772917452

Student No: C18134117L

## APPENDIX C: INFORMANT CONSENT

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### APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant

#### INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

**Researcher:** Crispen Mazodze

Institution: Chinhoyi University of Technology

Telephone Number: + 263 772917452

Email Address: [cmazodze@gmail.com](mailto:cmazodze@gmail.com)

**Main Supervisor:** Prof. Jacob Mapara

Institution: Chinhoyi University of Technology

Telephone Number: +263 772387981

Email: [jacob.mapara@gmail.com](mailto:jacob.mapara@gmail.com)

**Co- Supervisor:** Prof. Maria Tsvere

Institution: Chinhoyi University of Technology

Telephone Number: + 263 773365751

Email: [maria.tsvere@gmail.com](mailto:maria.tsvere@gmail.com)

I herewith certify, that I ....., hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the research as proposed by **Crispen Mazodze**.

The information regarding the aim, purpose, methodology and participation in this research was fully explained to me by **Crispen Mazodze** and I understand the implications of my participation.

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and I have received information to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

I understand that I am free to not answer specific questions during the interview.

I understand that any data and answers to the research question will remain confidential.

I understand that the results of his research may be made available to me if requested.

I understand that I am free to withdraw as a participant at any time with impunity.

I have received a copy of the information contained herein.

I ..... hereby consent to participate in the above study.

Name:..... Date:.....

Signature:.....

## APPENDIX D: APPROVAL LETTERS



### BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

P.Bag 1020  
Bindura, Zimbabwe

Tel: +263-0271-7615  
7531/2/6,7622/4  
Cell: 0772 154 882/7  
registrar@buse.ac.zw  
buseregistrar@gmail.com

### REGISTRY DEPARTMENT

Mr Chrispen Mazodze  
Student Affairs Department  
Bindura University of Science Education  
741 Chimurenga Road  
BINDURA

Dear Mr Mazodze

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT DATA COLLECTION AT THE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION: MR CHRISPEN MAZODZE

The above subject refers.

Bindura University of Science Education has granted you permission to carry out data collection in the Student Affairs Division, on your research project titled "Mainstreaming Indigenous African Epistemologies and Policies into Student Development in Higher Education" under the following conditions:-

- a) That you should treat all information strictly with utmost confidentiality and purely for Academic purposes only.
- b) That in carrying out this research you shall not disturb the business of the University.
- c) That the permission can be withdrawn at any time by the Registrar or by any higher officer.
- d) That you should avail to the Bindura University of Science education a copy of our research findings.

I wish you success in your research work and in your studies. If you have any concerns or require additional information please feel free to contact the Registrar.

Yours faithfully

S.G.Chitera (Mr)  
ACTING REGISTRAR

*"Promoting Science for Human Development"*



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## CHINHOI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

### HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

P. BAG 7724 CHINHOI  
TEL 067-2122203-5  
Email hr@cut.ac.zw

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Mr. Crispen Mazodze  
Student Affairs Department  
Bindura University of Technology  
741 Chimurenga Road  
**BINDURA**

Dear Mr. Mazodze

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT DATA COLLECTION AT CHINHOI  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY: MR CRISPEN MAZODZE**

---

The above Subject refers.

Chinhoi University of Technology has granted you permission to carryout data collection in the Student Affairs Division, on your research project titled "**Mainstreaming Indigenous African Epistemologies and Policies into Student Development in Higher Education**" under the following conditions:

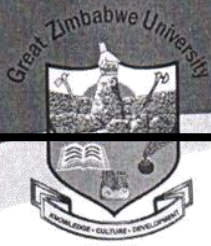
- a) That you should treat all information strictly with utmost confidentiality and purely for academic purposes only.
- b) That in carrying out this research you shall not disturb the business of the University.
- c) That the permission can be withdrawn at any time by the Registrar or by any higher officer.
- d) That you should avail to Chinhoi University of Technology a copy of our research findings

I wish you success in your research work and in your studies. If you have any concerns or require additional information please feel free to contact the Registrar.

Yours sincerely

**O. Chifamba (Mr.)**  
**Assistant Registrar**

Cc Registrar  
Dean of Students  
Deputy Registrar, Human Resources  
Personal File



## REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

+263 - 039- 2261079

P.O. Box 1235, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

registrar@gzu.ac.zw | sgwatidzo@gzu.ac.zw

15 September 2020

Crispen Mazodze  
Bindura University of Science Education  
741 Chimurenga Road  
Off Trojan Road  
**BINDURA**

Dear Sir

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY**

The above matter refers.

This is to confirm that your request has been approved.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the University and it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Registrar with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the University's strategic planning process.

Sincerely,

  
**S. Gwatidzo (Mrs)**

c.c Librarian

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY  
REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

15 SEP 2020

P.O. BOX 1235 MASVINGO  
ZIMBABWE  
TEL/FAX: (039) 264701

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SAPs**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?
2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner:
3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?
4. What is your philosophy towards student development?
5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?
6. Which student development programmes are offered at your university?
7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?
8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?
9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?
10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further
11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?
12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?
13. To what extent does your university fund SD programmes?
14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR SAPs

### Participant A

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?  
*ANS: - 14 Years of experience*
2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS: - My background is tertiary education inspired me, I was a lecturer focussing on imparting life skills on students, so when an opportunity arose for me to join the University, I grabbed it because I wanted to work with young adults who are the future leaders, to develop leadership skills and values in them.*
3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS: - No it did not. It is something that I gained through experience.*
4. What is your philosophy towards student development?  
*ANS:- When I look at Student Development at this University, I consider holistic development that is, a student being developed academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Developing the whole person.*
5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?  
*ANS:- We focus on the total development of the student through equipping the student with skills, such as leadership, entrepreneurship and helping them to be independent thinkers. The aim is to develop a leader in all spheres of life ie family, community, industry and political.*
6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?  
*ANS:- Financial literacy and Entrepreneurship we have clubs such as BOOST-ENACTUS, and for leadership development we have several such as LEOs, TOASTMASTERS, ROTARACT, HULT, STAR LEADERSHIP, DEBATE, INTERNATIONAL MENTORING and COACHING, GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FORUM, Junior Chamber International and array of others. For sexual reproductive Health and wellness we have SAYWHAT, Population Services Zimbabwe PADARE, RED CROSS, Female Students' Network, to mention just a few.*
7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?  
*ANS:-English is the main, although Shona is used here and there.*
8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?  
*ANS:-We use a combination of theories, mostly we borrow from the West- we didn't have any locally developed theories and models of SD.*
9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?



***ANS:- Yes, these theories were designed for European students, so they are sometimes not relevant to us. These theories emphasise so much on individualism and this is not in line with African values of togetherness.***

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

***ANS:- From the point of theories and models, we rely on theories informed by Western knowledge systems. However, we also encourage our students to have hunhu/Ubuntu as leaders. Though it's not planned, we do include indigenous knowledges and values in our activities with students.***

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

***ANS:- These programmes lead to a situation where our students look down upon their African identity; they are ashamed to be associated with their African backgrounds, especially those from the urban areas. They do not want to be associated with their Africanness, girls lighten their skins and use Brazilian braids to style their hair- boys change the colour of their hair. They speak in European tones and imitate Europeans. They think by doing so they can attain high class status.***

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: There is no ministerial policy. However, at institutional level we have a policy that guide Student Development Programmes. It is mainly informed by the theories of Tinto, Pascarella and Terenzini. We may use the Social Change Model of Student Development and it is the one that informs our policy.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: Yes but to a very little extent. We do depend mainly on external stakeholders such as SAYWHAT, BOOST ENACTUS, BANKS, Corporates and NGOs such as female student Network, PADARE, Junior Chamber International. SD is not valued much and it is not timetabled and it is left to be done informally, hence this gap is filled by external stakeholders, who come with their own agenda and they only fund activities that meet the requirements.***

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

***ANS: It is the way to go, we cannot continue to promote colonial programmes designed to make our students shun their culture, languages and blackness. There is need to inculcate our African values to deepen our African roots in SD programming through employing Ubuntu values.***

## **Participant B**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs practice?

*ANS:- 17 Years*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-I am from a nursing background and my first deployment was at a college and we were offering multi-purpose services such as counselling, health education and treatment to young adults. So when a vacancy arose at this university I jumped to join university because I wanted to provide guidance and academic advisory services to students who have the potential to be national leaders in future.*

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-Not necessary, However through working with students I now have sound knowledge of student development.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-Student Development should focus on producing societal leaders who are relevant to their communities. We should strive to produce holistic graduates who excel academically and in their character.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-The aim of student development at this university is to produce holistic graduates-graduate who are relevant to their communities and in the global village. Graduates who have leadership and entrepreneurial skills.*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Programmes offered at this university include Boost-Enactus, Debate, Toastmaster, Boost-Enactus, SAYWHAT, Peer Educators, ROTARACT, LEOS, STAR LEADERSHIP, International Mentoring and Coaching, Female Students Network, Junior Chamber International, success in Stilettos among others.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-English mainly though we use Shona here and there. Though officially the language we should use is English. We mostly use a mixture of English and Shona because of our cultural background. We are Africans and to emphasize a point we use Shona which is easily understood by most students.*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-Most of the theories that we use are from American and European theories such as Kohlberg, Tinto, Kuh, Pascarella, and Schuh among others. These are the ones who produced theories and models of SD that we fondly use in our programmes. We do not use any local theories because they are not there. Student Development*

*was started by American Student Affair practitioners hence they have developed many theories which are also easy to implement.*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:-Not many except that concepts of Student Development concepts found in these theories are opposed to our African background e.g. Western theories promote individualisation which is contrary to our local African values mainly of Ubuntu that promote togetherness. So at the end we see that we would have produced graduates who shun their backgrounds and who regard western 'things' as more superior to our local African ones.*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-To a lesser extent, because most of the materials are western, the theories and models of SD, the literature that we use to promote western values and knowledge. But I think this is not a big problem because we are now living in the global village where youngster quickly adapt to new cultures. Most students have forgotten their African background, there are some issues where we emphasize on hunhu/Ubuntu values. Campus culture is western and most of the SD programmes we inherited are Eurocentric.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-The impact is that students end up shunning their Africanness, they consider it being inferior. Indigenous cultural values end up being ended. This is seen when female students use skin lightening pills and creams to imitate being white, and we call them yellow bones. They also try to imitate white hairstyles. Male students would strive to speak through their nose imitating Western speech tones. Those who cannot catch up with these speech tones, skin colour and hairstyles are derisively regarded as SRB- i.e. those with strong rural background. So there is need to refocus our student development programmes on our local indigenous knowledges, cultural values of hunhu/Ubuntu.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

*ANS: Ministry has no known written policy on SD, However, at our institution we have one.*

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

*ANS: Student Development is not seriously regarded, hence funding is just too little. Further, SD is not timetabled therefore programmes are not usually budgeted for. So we end up depending on external partners e.g. Banks, Corporates and NGOs who fund some club activities. This is good but it takes away our power to decide which programmes they should fund as they come with their own agendas. Their literature*

*is Eurocentric and they strive to produce leaders who are programmed to support Eurocentric views and perspectives.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: I believe that there is need to balance western and African world views in SD to continue relying on entirely Eurocentric theories and books is like perpetrating neo-colonialism. Philosophy as it unites us as one people. Eurocentric Student development programmes produce leaders who are egocentric and those who look down on their African heritage.*

### **Participant C**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

*ANS: - 1 Year of experience*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:- My background in the field of Education where I worked is tertiary education where I worked as a high school teacher, where I was involved in working with Senior students at higher education level. I have interest in guiding young adults into responsible leaders.*

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-SD is all about developing students into well moulded and responsible citizen and societal leaders, thus my background as a counselling teacher prepared me to be a student development practitioner.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-My philosophy of student development is focussed on producing leaders who are responsible and who make an impact in the society as leaders in family, church, politics and industry. I also subscribe to the thinking that student development should be informed by our culture norms and values, so that we produce a graduate who is well mannered- 'munhu navanhu' – a person among other persons.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-The aim of student development at our university is to train and equip students with leadership and entrepreneurial skills. We aim to produce graduates who are relevant to their communities as leaders in industry and as employers' not just job seekers.*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Student Development programmes offered at this institution revolve around equipping students with leadership, civic, budgeting and entrepreneurial skills. Student Development is offered in clubs such as Toastmasters, Debate, Boost Enactus, Peer Educators, SAYWHAT, Red Cross and many others which are*

*subject/faculty based e.g. Zimbabwe Engineers Association, Marketers Association etc. These also clubs such as Drama and Poetry which is offered through student participation in student union and Student Representative Council activities.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-I am not certain which theories we are using on SD, but to point out that most of the student development activities practised here were borrowed from the University, the mother university which presided over the setting up of this university. Most student Affairs practitioners here were recruited from the University of Zimbabwe.*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:- The theories and models we use are not informed by indigenous knowledge, they were designed in the West. However, they are applicable to our situation, because industry also determines which values and skills that we should impart in our graduates so that they become employable - - Mastery of English language is a must in industry, therefore our programmes are offered in English.*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-To a lesser extent because the theories and the literature we use in SD is Western. Here and there, we urge our students to value hunhu/Ubuntu especially respecting elders. We need to use our own African languages to be able to instil our indigenous values into students.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-The impact of our student development programmes is both positive and negative. On the positives, we have produced political leaders as councillors and members o Parliament – we have also have graduates who are leaders in industry, religious leaders and also other spheres of life as entrepreneurs. On negative side, we have produced graduates who shun their identity, they shun the indigenous cultures and values and imitate whites, in terms of their dress, the food they prefer and identity. The female students use skin lightening creams and pills to try to remove their blackness and have lighter complexion. They look down upon those who uphold their traditional values. In terms of dress they prefer miniskirts and other attire that exposes their bodies instead of long dresses. As for males, they speak in nasal tones, wear oversized trousers copying Western musical artists whom they regard as their heroes.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science Technology and Development does not have a policy of SD that I know. Our University also does not have a written policy on SD.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: There is some funding but it's inadequate. SD funding is mainly from some small levies which are charged as part of ancillary fees. So its inadequate hence, we depend, mainly on user external partners who fund some clubs which promote their values. But these values are mainly neo-liberal.***

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

***ANS: Decolonising SD will be like a noble move because it's the best way to train leaders whose values and culture are not far from our indigenous culture. We should train leaders who value their traditional culture and pride in being Africans***

### **Participant D**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

***ANS:-7 Years as Student Affairs Practitioner***

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

***ANS:-I have interest in developing future leaders from young adults.***

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

***ANS:-I trained as a teacher and as a Counsellor. With this professional background could excel as a Student Affairs Practitioner working with students to develop our leaders of tomorrow.***

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

***ANS:-My philosophy of SD is that, it is important vehicle to provide leadership training and learning outside the lecture room.***

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

***ANS:-The aims of SD at this University are to impart life skills into students through an array of carefully planned SD programmes. This helps our students to acquire by doing, leadership skills, communication and registration skills, these are the skills that are required in the global village, coordinate activities that promote learning beyond the lecture room.***

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

***ANS:- Clubs- we have several clubs such as Debate, Toastmasters, Boost-Enactus, SAYWHAT, Peer Educators, ROTARACT, LEOS, STAR LEADERSHIP, International Mentoring and coaching, Red Cross, Female Students Network, and others that are discipline based e.g. Marketers Students Association, Engineering***

*Students Association, Accounting, Environmental Health and Safety. We do also train leadership through the Student Representative Council (SRC).*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:- The language that we use in SD is English- It is practically the official language at this University. Our indigenous languages suffer and students also look down upon those who can't speak English fluently with nasal tones. Language is the carrier of indigenous values and if we do not promote our languages they will end up being neglected.*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-I usually use Tinto's SD modelling theory where I intent to model students behaviour and develop their character to be responsible citizens.*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:-So far no problems have been encountered in using this theory, though some facets of the theory especially emphasis on individualism are not relevant to our African situation*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-Because of the language we use in SDP and the Western oriented clubs that students prefer, very little Indigenous knowledge is instilled in students the through these activities. However, I feel we need to have some indigenous knowledge in SD activities, so as to preserve our cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems. Others up having leaders whose value are uprooted from their African background.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-To a larger extent the impact of the Eurocentric SD is that we have instilled in students the thinking that Western Culture is superior to our African Culture and our students try very hard to imitate whites in dress, hairstyle, skin colour, speech tones. Through these attributes make them fit well in industry locally and internationally. The impact on students' identity consciousness is detrimental. They shun blackness, we have their complexion, and these are called yellow bones. Those who do not are looked down upon. Our culture, values and knowledge suffer because of this template of SD. I have counselled students who have been stressed by others because they did not have money to buy skin lightening creams and were derided by others as being 'bharanzi' i.e. they speak in indigenous language tones.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

*ANS: The Ministry does not a policy on SD that I know, so each University decides what it intends to teach its students through SD programmes. It will be good if the*

*Ministry have a policy which specifies students should be modelled through SDP. At institutional level, we do not have a written policy also, through our strategic documents like the mission statement outlines that we intent to produce well moulded student with hunhu/Ubuntu values. However, there is need to have a policy that clearly outlines the philosophy and objectives of SDP and how to achieve them.*

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

*ANS: Funding is very small because the SDPs are not timetabled hence they are not treated as being important. We tend to depend on external stakeholders, who fund clubs whose activities promote their interests and these interests are always neo-liberal and western-oriented.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: I believe decolonising SD Programmes is important in order to preserve our African identity, cultures, languages and values which are currently down played by Western styled SD Programmes. There should be a platform where Student Affairs Practitioners can share information on decolonising SD programmes.*

### **Participant E**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

*ANS:-11 Years as Student Affairs Practitioner in two Universities.*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-My interest to be a SAP was spurred by my professional training as a teacher where I developed great interest developing young minds into responsible adults. I have seen that organisations and communities fail because of lack or poor leadership, therefore when the opportunity of working with young adults presented itself I took so as to fulfil my desire.*

3. Di your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-To some extent, yes my training prepared me to be a SAP, because the theories and models that we use in SD are the same as those of students learning and instruction.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-My philosophy towards SD is student involvement ie involving students even in little things that affect them such as meals in the canteen and activities they do so that they own the process and activities. This helps them in decision-making and being responsible for one's actions and decisions.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-The aims of SD programmes at this university are to produce holistic graduates who excel both academically and socially, in order to produce leaders of*



*communities, industry and responsible citizen. To produce graduates who are innovative in solving community problems.*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Programmes offered range from leadership, grooming, citizenship engagement and innovation clubs for leadership training we have SRC, Clubs and Societies. Some of the prominent clubs include Debate, Toastmasters, Boost-Enactus, SAYWHAT, Peer Educators, ROTARACT, LEOS, STAR LEADERSHIP, International coaching, Red Cross, Female Students Network and many others that are faculty based. By participating in these clubs students put into practice what they would have learnt about leadership, decision-making, teamwork, communication and many other lifelong skills.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-The language of instruction is English although sometimes we use Shona and Ndebele, to emphasize a point. The literature that we use, the theories and models are all in English.*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-The theories that I may depend on are from Pascarella, Kohlberg, Terenzini and Tinto which emphasise that the environment has an impact on student's moral and character development.*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:-Yes, we have encountered problems such as ambivalence of values stressed in these theories which are not in sync with our African values.*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-Ubuntu values and indigenous culture are part of this university's mandate and mission. So when students come we ask about their cultural background, we call them by their totems to try to create relationships amongst students based on their totems so as to enhance hunhu/Ubuntu values of being each other's keeper. However we feel we could do more, we need to tap indigenous knowledge from the local people. There is a lot that students can learn from the local traditional elders and leaders in areas surrounding the university.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-Campus culture is Eurocentric due to SD programmes offered, identity consciousness I distorted as our students end up looking down on indigenous cultural values and knowledge systems.*

*Students end up shunning their blackness, their norms and values which they will look down upon as being backward.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

**ANS: The Ministry does not a policy on SD that I know of, hence each institution does what It feels good. The university is in the process of producing a policy on SD.**

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

**ANS: Funding for SD is very small, hence we end up depending on external stakeholders such as corporates and NGOs. But this create a problem in that they end up promoting their own agenda which is neo-liberal and not Afro-centred.**

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

**ANS: I fully support calls to decolonise SD programmes because we are Africans and our values and knowledge systems should take centre stage in SD programming. Afro-centric values should form the basis of student moral and character building**

### **Participant F**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

**ANS:-I have 3 years as a Student Affairs Practitioner**

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

**ANS:-I started to work in the University environment as a Security guard, observed students had no respect nor friendly relations with the campus security personnel. Further, I noticed that most students were lacking in 'hunhu/ubuntu' values so when opportunity to be a warden arose I took it up since I wanted to help instil Ubuntu values in students. Years later, I then joined the Student Affairs Department as a fulltime Student Affairs Practitioner.**

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

**ANS:-No, I trained as a Security Guard, and Student Development is something I gained through experience in working with students.**

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

**ANS:-My philosophy of SD is anchored on hunhu/Ubuntu- with the aim of producing a complete graduate excelling academically and socially, endowed with the value of respect, empathy, humility and togetherness.**

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

**ANS:-The aim is to train leaders who are functional in their communities, leaders who will transform their communities.**

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

**ANS:- Leadership development, entrepreneurship and spiritual development through the SRC, Sub-wardens, CLUBS such as SAYWHAT, Female Students Network,**

***Rotaract, TOASTMASTERS, DEBATE, BOAST ENACTUS, PEER EDUCATORS  
Junior Chamber International, LEOs and various religious societies.***

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

***ANS:-Mainly English, although for emphasis we use Shona and Ndebele. It will be good to use our African languages because they enable students to freely express themselves.***

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

***ANS:-Basically we rely on Western theories and models because the literature that we use has those theories and some are not relevant to our environment but we just pick those that are relevant.***

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

***ANS:-The theories were developed by Westerners and they were designed for a purpose that is to capture the minds of Africans so that they extol Western values, knowledge and cultures. Indigenous African knowledge, cultures and languages are looked down .....***

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

***ANS:- Yes but to a lesser extent due to a variety of factors such as lack of literature, almost all books/material on SD was produced by Western, scholars. On the positive side, I talked about Ubuntu so we also encourage our students to have hunhu/Ubuntu values.***

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

***ANS:-We produce graduates who sun their African cultural background, who believe everything European is superior and must be copied, e.g. they speak English with British or American ascent i.e. the nose brigades they copy Western hairstyles and female try to change their skin complexion to white the so called yellow bones. This shows the death of our African culture and knowledge systems.***

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: Not that I know – at institutional level we do not have a specific policy on SD but it is embedded in other documents and structures in the University e.g. Ordinance number 2 tries to foster the moulding of a morally upright person.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: Financial support is quite little, hence we tend to rely on external partners such as SAYWHAT, National Aids Council, Higherlife Foundation, corporates such as***

*banks, BOOST-ENACTUS. However, they also bring their own ideologies which may not be in sync with our philosophy on SD.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: I fully support the need to decolonise not only SD but the institutional practices e.g. allowing boys and girls to visit each other in their study bedrooms late in the night, holding the mace at graduation? What does this symbolise?*

### **Participant - G**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

*ANS:-17 Years as Student Affairs Practitioner*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:- My professional background as a teacher and then a college lecturer exposed me to working with students in clubs and sports and this spurred to want to be involved more in moulding future community leaders and captains of industry. Especially instilling into them not to forget their African cultural background.*

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-Yes as a teacher and lecturer, my professional training prepared me to work as a student development practitioner. Students call me 'Tete' implying that I am their mentor or advisor.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-My philosophy with regard to Student Development is to develop a complete person with hunhu/Ubuntu. When students come to university, they are told that it is a place of freedom, however, often times they are not told that they need to discipline themselves otherwise that freedom may lead to their destruction and it ceases to be freedom but freedom.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-Produce leaders who are well groomed and ethical, graduates who are proud of their cultural background and also to impart into students life skills such as teamwork and networking.*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Clubs, societies and sporting activities – popular one are Boost-Enactus, Toastmasters, Debate, SAYWHAT, Padare, Red Cross, Rotaract, Junior Chamber International, discipline such as Science and Innovation, Marketers Students Association, Computer Society and religious based clubs.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

***ANS:-English although local indigenous African languages are used here and there. Books that we use are all written in English of instruction. English although local indigenous African languages are used here and there. Books that we use are all written in English.***

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

***ANS:- Popular theories are the like of Tinto's environmental factors theory of SD. Kohlberg's moral development and Pascarella and Terenzini social transformation theory. They are mostly western theories. There are no known theories of SD based on indigenous knowledges.***

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

***ANS:-Some theories are not applicable especially now with emphasis on Zimbabwe of Ubuntu/hunhu theories.***

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

***It is very important to include indigenous knowledge that ..... with what students find in their cultural backgrounds. Campus culture is a mixture of Afro centism and Eurocentric with the latter gaining an upper hand. When students join the university – they are mainly Afrocentric and when they spent a year at University they come to year 2 and 4, they would have changed, they would now be yellow bones, nose brigades. So there is need to impart indigenous knowledges into students through SD programmes. The majority of students at this university are from rural areas and when they come to university they change what they eat, wear and how they talk.***

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

***ANS:-Much of the impact is what I have just said in the previous question. Change in complexion, to yellow bones for female students, change in dress, food and speech tones.***

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: I am not aware of any ministerial policy on student development. At this institution we have no specific policy on SD, but some institutional documents emphasis on the need to develop a holistic graduate with hunhu/Ubuntu values.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: Not much, though the university provides some funds for specific programmes such as the orientation of first year students. For student clubs and societies no we tend to depend on external partners such as corporates and N.G.Os.***

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: Yes to a certain extent it is important to decolonise SD programmes and provide space for indigenous cultures and languages. This helps students to be proud of the Africanness. However, there is a challenge of literature, since most books on SD are written by Western authors.*

### **Participant- H**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

*ANS:-Six Years as Student Affairs Practitioner.*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-I was a teacher before joining the University and it is from this experience that I was inspired to be a student affairs practitioner as this would give me an opportunity to help mentor future leaders. I realised that there was a gap in the way students were moulded into leadership and/ felt I had a role to play.*

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-Yes as a trained teacher, most of the theories that we used in education are relevant and almost the same with those SD.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-I am motivated by hunhu/Ubuntu philosophy of the indigenous Bantu people for Southern Africa. If our students are imparted with Ubuntu values then we would have produced a holistic graduate.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-To develop a wholesome individual, physically spiritually, emotionally and intellectually*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Leadership development, spiritual growth, sexual and reproductive health, life skills, health and sexual reproductive education. We have clubs such as Female Students Network, Rotaract, TOASTMASTERS, DEBATE, BOAST ENACTUS, and PEER EDUCATORS. There are also subject based clubs.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-Mainly English because the curriculum is offered in English. However, indigenous languages are often used since SD Programmes are often offered informal curricular activities*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-I am not sure of the theories that are used however, I am aware of the model of student leadership we use here is the Social Change model which seeks to transform the student emotionally and socially.*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:-We have not encountered any problems.*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-Yes we also emphasise the need for our students to have hunhu/Ubuntu values. However, it is clear that the use of western models and language shows that the space for indigenous knowledge in our activities is very small. Our campus culture is elitist and students from rural backgrounds initially struggle to fit in.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-Students from rural areas struggle to fit into the system and they end up abandoning their traditional values and copy their counterparts from towns who are elitist in the way they speak, dress, and the type of food. They would end up bleaching their skin to be light in complexion. Thus our programmes end up promoting western values at the expense of indigenous – Ubuntu values.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

*ANS: I am not aware of any Ministerial policies and at institutional level, we do not have a clearly defined and written policy. However, in other university documents such as the mission statements and ordinances on residence life there is emphasis on holistic development of the student with humane values such as integrity, togetherness.*

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

*ANS: We have a levy for SD programmes- however, it is inadequate and we end up depending on our partners like BANKS, SAYWHAT, NATION AIDS COUNCIL, Higherlife Foundation, BOOST-ENACTAS but the problem is that they tend to fund programmes that are in line with their interests which are neo-liberal. For example Funding for SD is very small, For example some our partners emphasise the use of condoms and morning after pills. This may be interpreted as encouraging promiscuity while in our culture we encourage the youth to refrain from sexual activities before marriage. This cultural incompatibility affects students from rural areas mainly because back home their parents expect them to shun from sexual activities yet at university the first thing they are exposed to at first year orientation programmes is the condom and the morning after pill.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: personally I adore Ubuntu/hunhu as a guiding philosophy for SD activities, hence the calls to decolonise SD are justified, because the western models of SD are treated as the panacea for SD at their university. We need to place emphasis on African values because the models we are using were designed to make our students shun their blackness and cultural values.*

### **Participant I**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

*ANS:-5 Years as Student Affairs Practitioner.*

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:- My background as a Guidance and Counselling teacher at high school exposed me to working with young adults and when an opportunity to join the university I grabbed as I wanted to develop responsible citizens for our country and the global village.*

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

*ANS:-Yes, my training as a teacher for Guidance and Counselling prepared me well to work with young adults. Though, for student affairs practice, I improved through experience.*

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

*ANS:-My philosophy of SD is shaped by our cultural values of hunhu/Ubuntu. If our students embrace Ubuntu values, then we would be successful in moulding responsible citizens who are humble, who are respectful and have integrity.*

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

*ANS:-To develop holistic graduates with Ubuntu values and who are innovative and entrepreneurial.*

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

*ANS:-Life skills, sexual reproductive and health, leadership, first year orientation, entrepreneurship. Clubs such as Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract, LEOs, SAYWHAT, and Female Students Network are the most popular ones.*

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-Basically it is English however, local languages are often used to emphasise points.*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?



***ANS:-Identity development theories by the likes of Pascarella, Terenzini, Moral Development theories- Kohlberg, Environmental impact theories – Tinto and leadership development-Schuh, Pascarella.***

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

***ANS:-Some of these theories are irrelevant to our Zimbabwean background done to cultural differences. Western theories emphasise on the individual yet in our culture an individual is because of others. So there is cultural incompatibility.***

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

***ANS:-Yes, but to a lesser extent, because our institutional culture is western, the language instruction is English. The literature we use in SD is Western so the room for indigenous knowledge is very small and informal.***

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

***ANS:-Affects identity consciousness of students, they believe European values, speech tones, hair styles and dressing is best, create inferiority complex in our students. Thus from rural areas suffer from shock and failure to adjust to copy those who follow western values.***

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: There is no written ministerial policy that I know and at university level we have a policy on SD that encompasses on holistic development.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: Not properly funded therefore this leave a gap that is filled by our external partners like BOOST-ENACTUS, SAYWHAT, Female Students Network, banks and other NGOs. These come with their own ideologies and this creates problems because they tend to promote values that are foreign to our culture. Students end up being socialised on western values which is detrimental to our culture.***

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

***ANS: Yes it is important as this helps to cultivate Afrocentric values in our students. However, there would be need for institutions to fund SD activities seriously and to do away with some of the western based activities such as Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract and LEOs which are outposts of British cultural hegemony and imperialism.***

## **Participant -J**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?  
*ANS:-8 years as a Student Affairs Practitioner*
2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS:-I have a background in nursing and when an opportunity arose to join university I took it because I have interest in working with young adults.*
3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS:-No, but with experience I am now fully versed with student affairs practice.*
4. What is your philosophy towards student development?  
*ANS:-I believe in developing a responsible citizen, endowed with Ubuntu values.*
5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?  
*ANS:-Leadership, spiritual and psycho-social development.*
6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?  
*ANS:-Boost Enactus, SAYWHAT, PEER EDUCATORS, Female students Network, Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract, LEOs, RED CROSS and several discipline-based clubs.*
7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?  
*ANS:-Mainly English, though local languages are used often because SD is offered informally.*
8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?  
*ANS:-Theories we use are western-disguised e.g. Identity development, environmental impact leadership development theories by Terenzini, Tinto, Astin, Kuh, Pascarella.*
9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?  
*ANS:-Some of the theories are not compatible to our cultural environment and are irrelevant.*
10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further  
*ANS:-No room for this in the university system because we use European mode of curriculum. Our universities are based on European model that instils European values. Hence we end up with our students calling themselves 'salads' nose brigades, yellow bones and they mock those who do not adhere to western values as backwards.*
11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

***ANS:-Both positive and negative. On the positive- we are producing graduates who are groomed to the culture of industry which is western. Negatives – leads to the death of our culture, languages and identity.***

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

***ANS: No Ministerial policy that I know. A policy on SD per se but it is immersed in other documents of the University such as mission statements.***

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

***ANS: Not fully funded, hence we end up depending on corporates and NGOs who fund neo-liberal programmes that meet their interest or those of their funders.***

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

***ANS: It should be the guiding philosophy of SD in an African University – help production Afrocentric graduates***

### **Participant- K**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

***ANS:-11 years' experience in student affairs practice.***

2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

***ANS:-Educational background motivated me to be a student affairs practitioner. I trained as a teacher and hence in interest in developing young minds, into mature and responsible citizens.***

3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

***ANS:-Yes, I trained as a teacher and theories of education are very similar to those of student development.***

4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

***ANS:-Ubuntu should be the guiding philosophy in SD as this helps produce graduates who are responsible and with integrity***

5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

***ANS:-Leadership, spiritual and physical and intellectual development.***

6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

***ANS:- Boost Enactus, SAYWHAT, PEER EDUCATORS, Female students Network, Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract, LEOs, RED CROSS, HULT, First year and discipline-based clubs.***

7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

*ANS:-Mainly English, though indigenous languages always find their way in because student development is offered as part of informal curriculum.*

8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

*ANS:-Mainly we use western theories and models such as identity development environmental impact and leadership development theories by the likes of Tinto, Pascarella, Terenzini, Astin, and Schuh*

9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

*ANS:-Yes some of these theories are irrelevant to our cultural background eg they tend to promote individualism yet in our African culture, a person lives because of others ' I am because we are'*

10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

*ANS:-To a lesser extent because of institutional culture and the literature that we use. However, we are not doing enough to tap from our African cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems. There is need to do more to tap IKs from the local community surrounding the university.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-Create identity confusion in students, students not being proud of the cultural background-inferiority complex as those from the rural areas are looked down upon and struggle to fit in the Eurocentric university culture. We end up having students from Bvukururu (rural Masvingo) imitating and trying to be someone from Borrowdale (elite suburbs of Harare)*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

*ANS: No am not aware and no University policy.*

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

*ANS: institutional funding is inadequate and we partner with external stakeholders such as corporates, Boost-Enactus SAYWHAT, female student networks, Katswe Sisterhood. However, these organisation tend to promote values that are foreign to our students e.g. in Student Sexual Reproductive Health they encourage use of condoms yet in our culture we encourage students not to be promiscuous as this is regarded as immoral behaviour.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: I support this move as it helps us to use Afrocentric values to impart life skills and values in our students, such as togetherness empathy and integrity.*

## **Participant - L**

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?  
*ANS:-6years in student affairs practice.*
2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS:-My educational background as a teacher spurred me to be a student affairs practitioners as I enjoy working with young adults guiding them to be responsible members of the society.*
3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?  
*ANS:-Yes it prepared since I started as a teacher then a college lecturer before joining the university.*
4. What is your philosophy towards student development?  
*ANS:-I am inspired by Ubuntu philosophy where the well-being of the individual depends on others and vice versa. If our students are endowed with Ubuntu values, then we will produce responsible members of society with integrity.*
5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?  
*ANS:-Total development of the individual with leadership, self-esteem and entrepreneurship skills.*
6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?  
*ANS:- Boost Enactus, SAYWHAT, PEER EDUCATORS, Female students Network, Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract, LEOs, RED CROSS, First year and discipline-based clubs.*
7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?  
*ANS:-English however, local languages are often used to emphasise points.*
8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?  
*ANS:-Mainly leadership and identity development theories of Tinto, Astin, Pascarella.*
9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?  
*ANS:-Some of these theories are irrelevant to our Zimbabwean context because they emphasize on values that are at cross-purposes with our Ubuntu values e.g. individualism in ubuntu and we emphasise on togetherness*
10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further  
*ANS:-Our institutional culture is western oriented due to colonial o a lesser extent because of institutional culture is western-oriented due to colonial legacy. So we*

*depend on western knowledges for SD yet there is a lot to learn from indigenous knowledge values.*

11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

*ANS:-production of graduates with inferiority complex, their blackness and try to escape from this by bleaching their skin hairstyles and dress as well as speech tones. African culture is looked down upon by the younger generation – leading to death of African Cultural values.*

12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

*ANS: No am not aware and at institutional level we do not have yet.*

13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

*ANS: inadequate and we are depending on external stakeholders such as corporates and NGOs whose ideologies may be not in sync with our cultural values.*

14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonise student Development Programmes?

*ANS: It is the way to go – we need to in calculate Ubuntu values, our identity in SD programmes.*

## **APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH STUDENT LEADERS**

### **Questions that guided the Focus Group Discussion**

1. Which student development (SD) activities are offered at your university? Which ones are popular? And why?
2. How would you describe the campus culture at your university? Afrocentric or Eurocentric or elitist?
3. Most SD programmes offered in our universities do not include indigenous knowledges. Why do you think they are excluded?
4. What is the impact of SD programmes on the growth and development of students?
5. What are your views on decolonizing SD programmes/ inclusion of indigenous knowledge into SD?

## **APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPTION**

### **SIX (6) STUDENT LEADERS PARTICIPATED IN THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.**

**They are coded as participant M, N, O, P, Q and R.**

#### **Question 1: Which SD programmes are availed at your university?**

**Participant M** – there are a variety but they range from Debate, Toastmasters, Rotaract, Peer educators, SAYWHAT, Junior Chamber International.

**Participant N** – we have Boost – Enactus and most of the clubs outlined by my colleague. We also have Marketers Students Association and various sporting codes, such as Football, Netball, Basketball, Handball, and Rugby.

**Participant O-** TOASTMASTERS, DEBATE, BOAST ENACTUS, PEER EDUCATORS, Female Students Network, Rotaract

**Participant Q** We also have Debate, Toastmasters, Leos, Rotaract, SAYWHAT, Padare, church related clubs. We also have the student Representative and those whom we elect and preside over the issue of student governance.

**Participant P-** Students participate in several leadership development activities in clubs such as Boost-Enactus, Hult, Rotaract, Leos and SAYWHAT. There are also a variety of sports clubs such as football, basketball, cricket, hockey, golf and rugby.

**Participant R-** At our university there are so many clubs which a student can join and develop his life skills for example Debate, Junior Chamber International, Female Students Network, Toastmasters, Rotaract, SAYWHAT, and Peer Educators.

#### **Question 2: How would you describe the Campus culture at your university?**

**Participant M-**It is a mixture of traditional and western way of life. Western in that the use of English as the medium of instruction and officialdom is their thing. The popular sports are cricket and golf and these are funded, they go wherever they want unlike other sports who may be told that there is no money. This shows that elitist culture is dominating at our university.

**Participant P** -the majority of students at our university are from rural areas and there are some from the cities hence it's a blend of the African and elite culture

**Participant N-** Campus culture at our university is a mixture of traditional and western styles, however, most students would like to follow western culture in their dress, hair styles and speech tones.

**Participant Q** - Clubs such Junior Chamber International, Boost-Enactus, Toastmasters and Rotaract are popular because they have funding from banks and other companies. This shows that our campus culture is largely Western.



**Participant O** It is a blend of traditional and western though western style dominates. Even the menu in the students' canteen is mainly Western foods and no traditional foods.

**Participant R** in terms of the curriculum our university is western because we inherited European system from the colonial administrators.

**Question 3: Exclusion of indigenous knowledges in SD programmes. Why?**

**Participant M-** It starts with the language of instruction, we use English and local languages we never considered as mediums of instruction. Language is a carrier of a people's knowledge systems and culture, so absence of local languages from the curriculum is the reason why indigenous knowledge's are excluded from SD programmes.

**Participant N** traditional ways of life and values were demonized under colonization and the whites endorsed their own cultures and knowledge systems as superior to the local culture. This has continued even after the end of colonization, because after independence we maintained the ways and systems of the whites.

**Participant O** -We have abandoned our indigenous culture and we invited European culture, therefore, in SD we also prefer those which are western because we see it as giving us status.

**Participant P-** The literature we use in SD is written by European authors and this results in the exclusion of indigenous knowledge's in SD programmes. Programmes that include indigenous culture such as traditional dance are looked down on this leads to students disliking being associated with activities that promote our local culture

**Participant Q-** The popular clubs on campus such as debate, Toastmaster, Rotaract, Leos, International Coaching and Mentoring, Rotaract and Junior Chamber International, Boost-Enactus have sponsors from the industry sector and as such they attract most students. However they promote European ways of thinking and culture therefore, this led to the death of local culture and languages in SD on our campuses.

**Participant R-**When you come to university you are oriented to university culture, processes and procedures based on western knowledges. Students from deep rural areas such as Muzarabani, Dotito, Binga, Bocha, Bvukururu or Thsolotsho for example experience culture shock when they come to university. So orientation programmes must be designed in way that accommodates students from remote rural areas include their cultural values.

**Question 4: Impact of SD programmes on students**

**Participant M** Western culture which is dominant at the campus often collides with indigenous values resulting in identity crisis in students. This leads to students who try to copy western speech tones, dress and hair styles. Students who do not have western fashioned dress feel isolated and are looked down upon. This forces some weak students to engage in practices such as prostitution to get money to buy such clothes and hair styles.

**Participant N** social orientation of students from rural areas changes because the campus environment provides freedom where one feels free to practice life styles they like. Those

from rural areas are regarded as SRB (strong rural background) and they are looked down. They are often urged catch up quickly... *haikonakusarira* (which literally means do not be left behind by the fashion trends). So such students end trying hard to be elitist like their colleagues from cities.

**Participant O** Clubs like Toastmasters, Debate and Leos are designed to promote British culture and they are popular with most students. Campus clubs are linked with parent clubs in cities where corporate leaders who lead these clubs socialize students in workplace etiquette which is mainly British culture. This leads to the death of indigenous culture and languages on our campuses.

**Participant P** When students come to university from high school they quickly try to change their lifestyles, e.g. hair food and sporting clubs. For as girls, we become uncomfortable in our natural hair, we begin to use Indian and Brazilian hair/braids. Because if you are an SRB guys may not look at you. Some of the girls begin to bleach the skin to be yellow bones, who are preferred by boys.

**Participant O-** When you come to university you change the type of sporting club, if you were playing football, you will change to sports of status such as rugby and cricket. Even what we eat we try to change so at the end we will black in skin only but our thinking will be white.

**Participant R** - Most students would shun student development activities that promote indigenous culture such as traditional dance, due to inferiority complex.

#### **Question5: Views on decolonization or inclusion of indigenous knowledge into student development**

**Participant M** - It is important to include our indigenous knowledges and culture in SD, so as that we maintain our identity. Even if we try to copy we will never be white and the whites will not accept us as one of their own because we imitate their way of life.

**Participant N** - We should encourage Afrocentrism in our curriculum and campus life activities. The university should provide funding for activities that promote indigenous languages and culture such as traditional dance. Our Ubuntu philosophy should be the guiding theory of SD.

**Participant O-** First we should consider using our indigenous languages in the curriculum and this will make students to be proud of languages and black identity. Inculcating ubuntu values helps raise students' self-esteem and make them be proud of their African identity.

**Participant P** -Universities must re-structure SD programmes and promote activities that conscientise Africans that we are not inferior to whites and that our cultures, knowledges and languages are not inferior. There is need to introduce clubs that promote our indigenous culture and values.

**Participant Q** - Student development should prioritize African indigenous menus in the canteen, the speaking of indigenous languages, like Shona, Ndebele, Nda, Kalanga, Venda, Shangani in university committee meetings. We should also set aside a day per week where students and staff wear African attire and encourage Afrocentrism. There are no longer *Tete* and *Sekurus* to impact ubuntu values in the young therefore the curriculum should be designed to play that role.

## APPENDIX I: NVIVO DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS

1. How long have you been in the Student Affairs Management?

Experience in Student Affairs Management	Number of Student Affairs Practitioners
	<b>n=12</b>
1-5 years	3
6-10 years	4
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	2

The table is quite self explanatory.

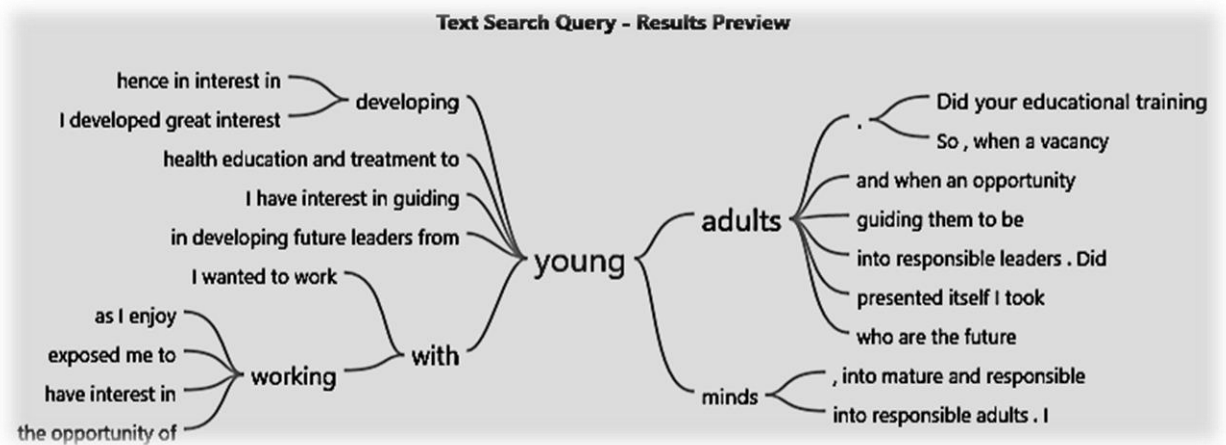
2. What motivated you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

A word cloud of the respondents' verbatim responses on what motivated them to become SAPs was extracted. The top three themes that emerged were young, adults and background.



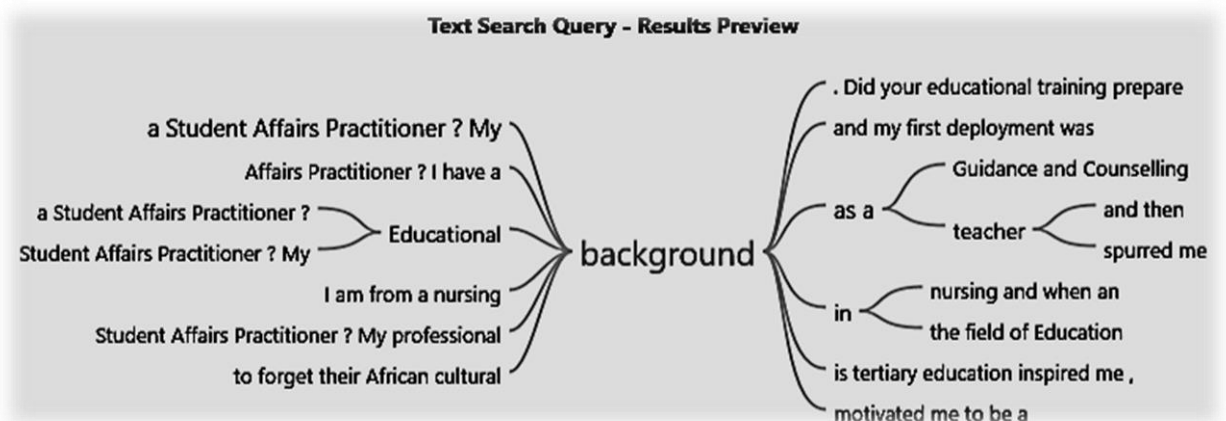
**Young and adults**

The word “young” emerged as the top theme, which was mentioned by 9 SAPs for 10 times. A word tree, which showed what the respondents actually said in relation to the word “young” was also extracted. The word “adults” was also mentioned by 9 respondents for 9 times, and emerged as the second most discussed theme.



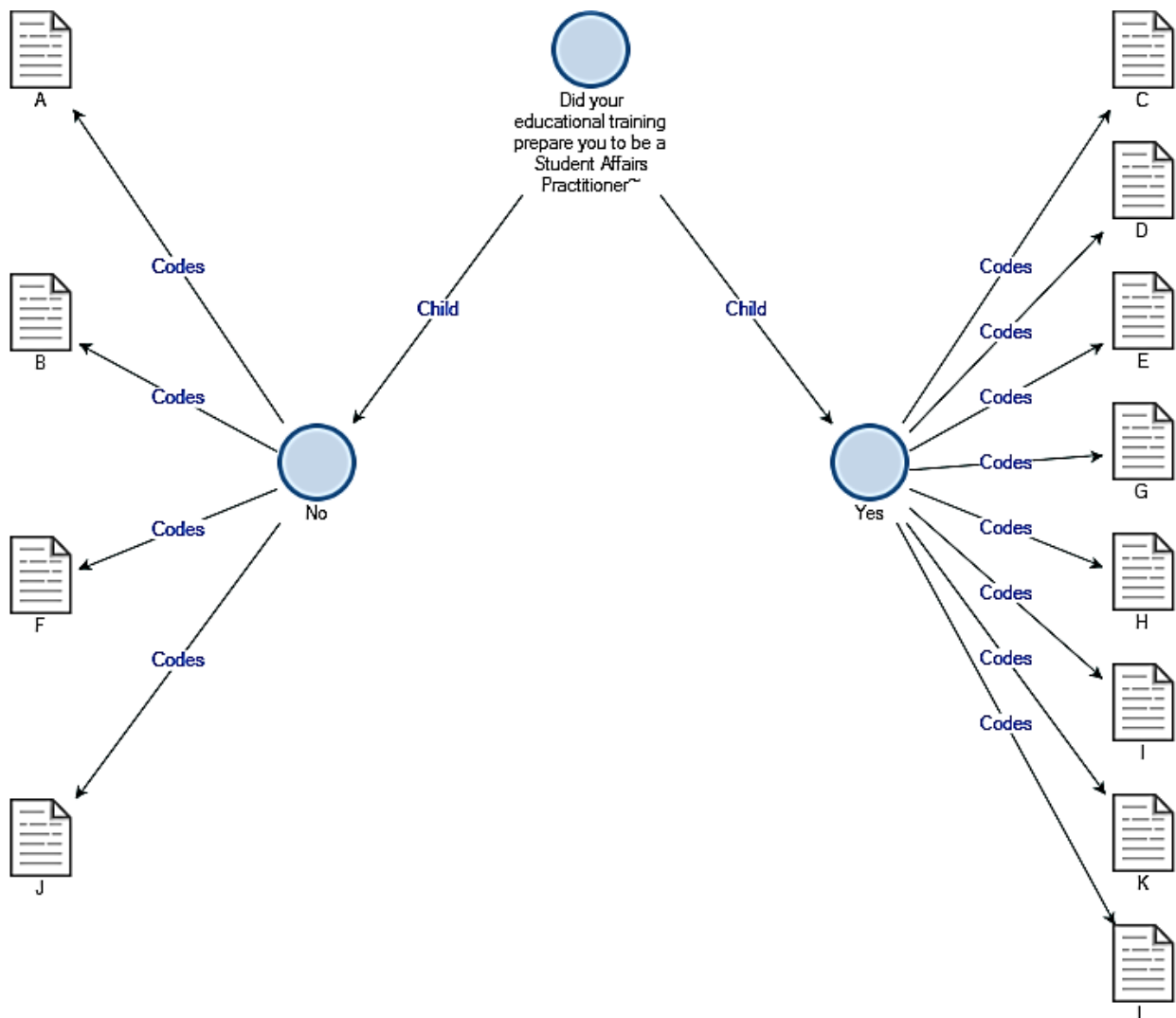
### Background

The word “background” emerged as the third most discussed theme by the SAPs. It was mentioned by 8 SAPs for 9 times.



### 3. Did your educational training prepare you to be a Student Affairs Practitioner?

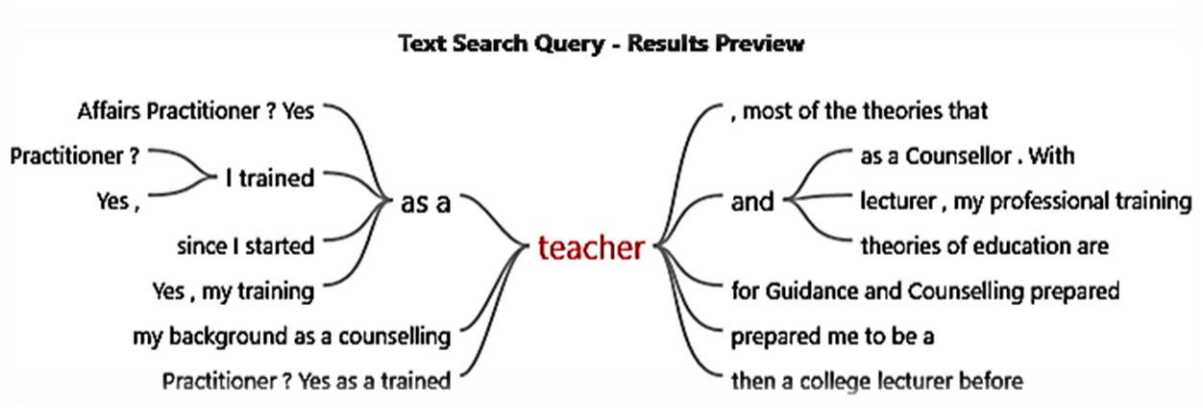
The SAPs responses were coded under the “Yes” or “No” nodes. The respondents whose responses were affirmative to the above questions were coded under the yes node, whilst those whose responses were negative were coded under the no node. A comparative diagram was subsequently extracted to pictorially show the number of respondents under each code. Each “child” arrow leads to the codes that were developed from the SAPs responses, which in this case are yes or no. The diagram shows that the majority of the SAPs (8 out of 12) agreed that their educational training prepared them to be in their current profession. However, only a few (4 out of 12) did not believe that their educational background prepared them to be SAPs.



A word cloud of the verbatim responses of the SAPs who agreed that their educational background prepared them to be in their current professions was extracted. Three major themes emerged, which included teacher, yes and prepared.

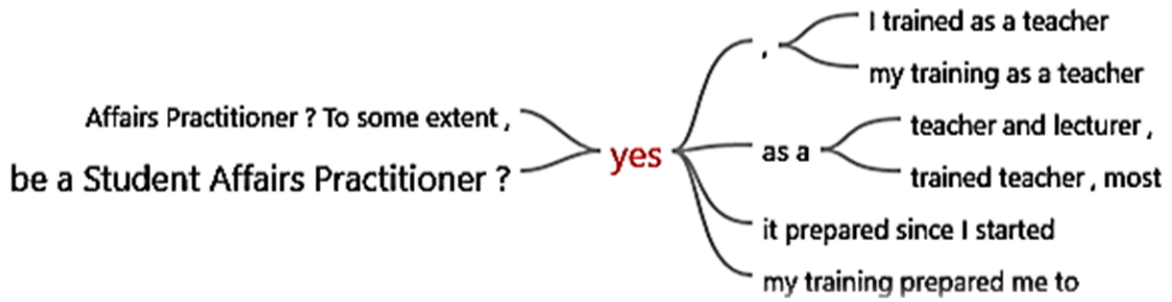


The word “teacher” was mentioned by 7 SAPs for 7 times, thereby emerging as the most discussed theme. A word tree of what was actually said by the SAPs in relation to the word teacher was subsequently extracted.



The second most discussed theme by the SAPs was the word “yes”, which was mentioned by 6 people for 6 times. A word tree showing how the word yes was used by the respondents was also extracted.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



The word “prepared” emerged as the third most discussed theme by the SAPs. It was mentioned by 4 SAPs for 4 times. A word tree output diagram below depicts how the word was used in the SAPs verbatim responses.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



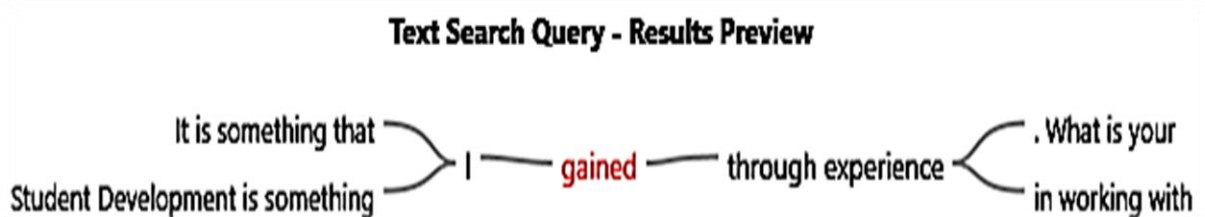
A word cloud of the 4 SAPs who believed that their teaching background prepared them to be in their current professions was also extracted. Two main themes emerged, which included the words gained and working.





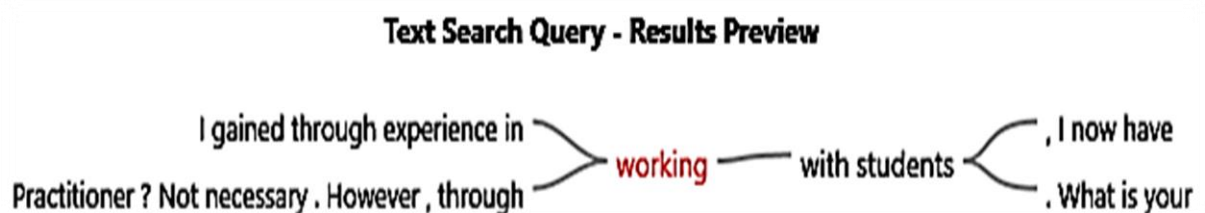
## Gained

The word gained was mentioned by 2 SAPs for 2 times. Below is the word tree output diagram showing how the word was actually used in their responses.



## Working

The word working was also mentioned by 2 SAPs for 2 times. The word tree output diagram below shows how the word was used in their verbatim responses.

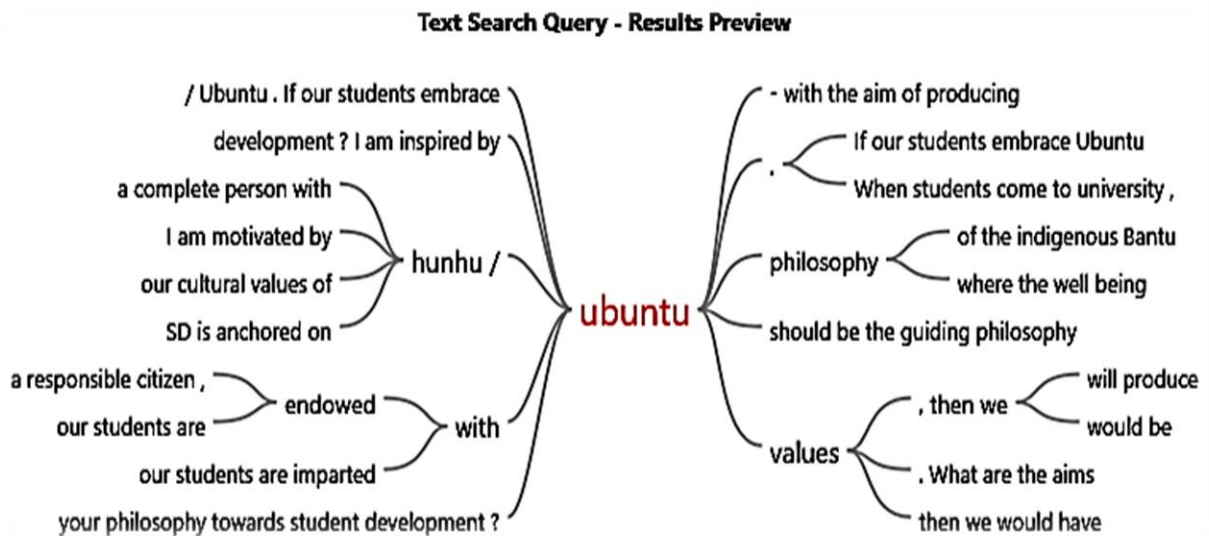


### 4. What is your philosophy towards student development?

The word cloud of the SAPs verbatim responses on their philosophy towards student development was extracted. Three top themes emerged that included ubuntu, responsible and values.



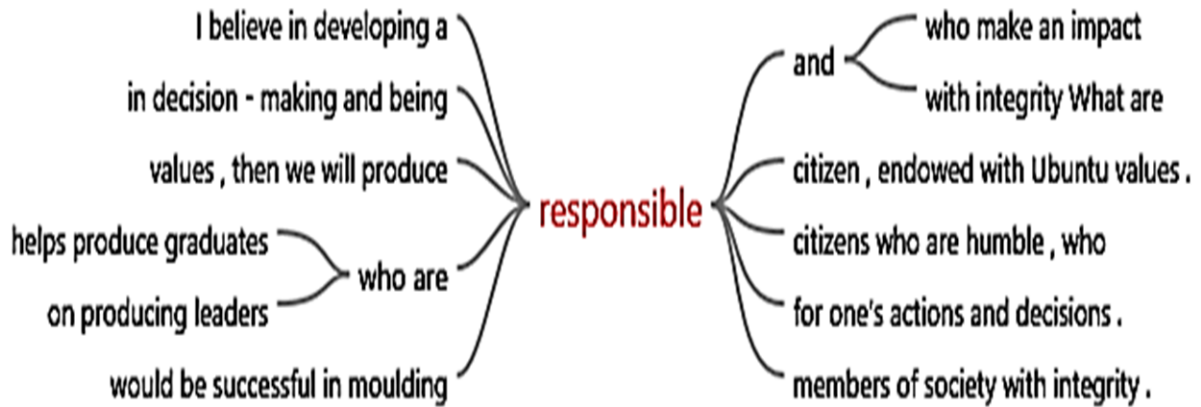
**Ubuntu:** 7 out of the 12 SAPs interviewed for 10 times. The word tree output below shows how the word ubuntu was used in the SAPs responses.



## Responsible

The second most discussed theme was the word responsible. The word was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 6 times. A word tree output diagram showing how they used the word responsible in their verbatim responses was extracted.

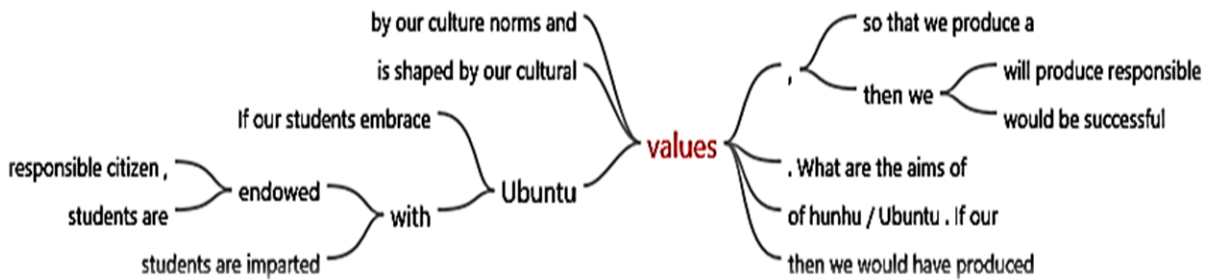
### Text Search Query - Results Preview



### Values

Values emerged as the third most discussed theme by the SAPs. It was mentioned by 5 of the interviewees for 6 times. Below is the word tree output diagram showing how they used the word in their responses.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview



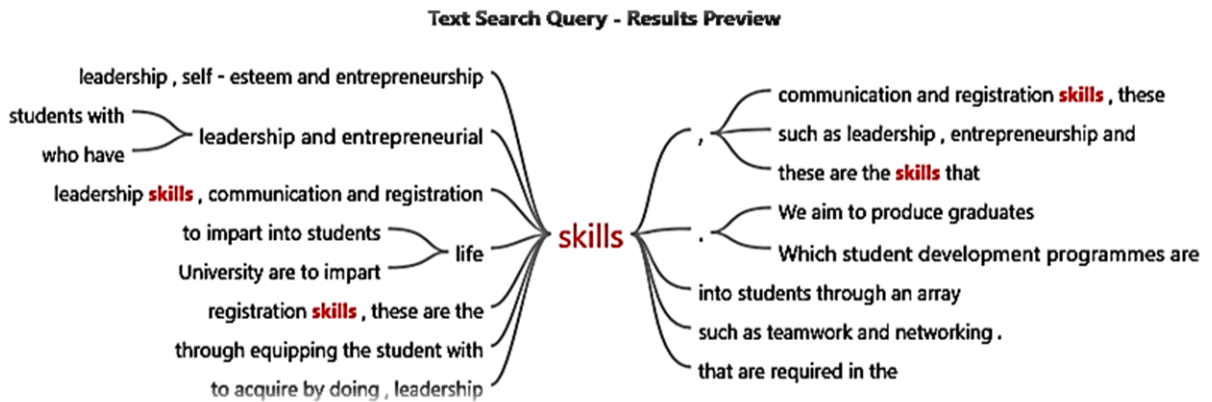
5. What are the aims of student development at your institution?

A word cloud of the SAPs' verbatim responses to the enquiry on the aims of student development at their institutions was extracted. The top 3 themes that emerged included skills, graduates and leadership.



**Skills**

The word skills emerged as the top theme, which was mentioned by 6 out of the 12 SAPs who participated in the study for 9 times. Below is the word tree output diagram showing how the word was used in their responses.



**Leadership**

The second most discussed theme was the word leadership. The word was mentioned by 7 SAPs for 7 times. A word tree output diagram of their verbatim responses was also extracted.

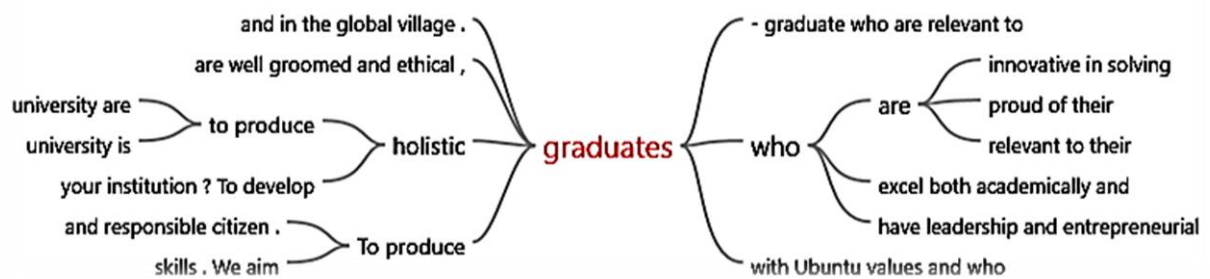
**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Graduates**

The word “graduates” was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 7 times, thereby emerging as the third most discussed theme. A word cloud of their actual verbatim responses was also extracted.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



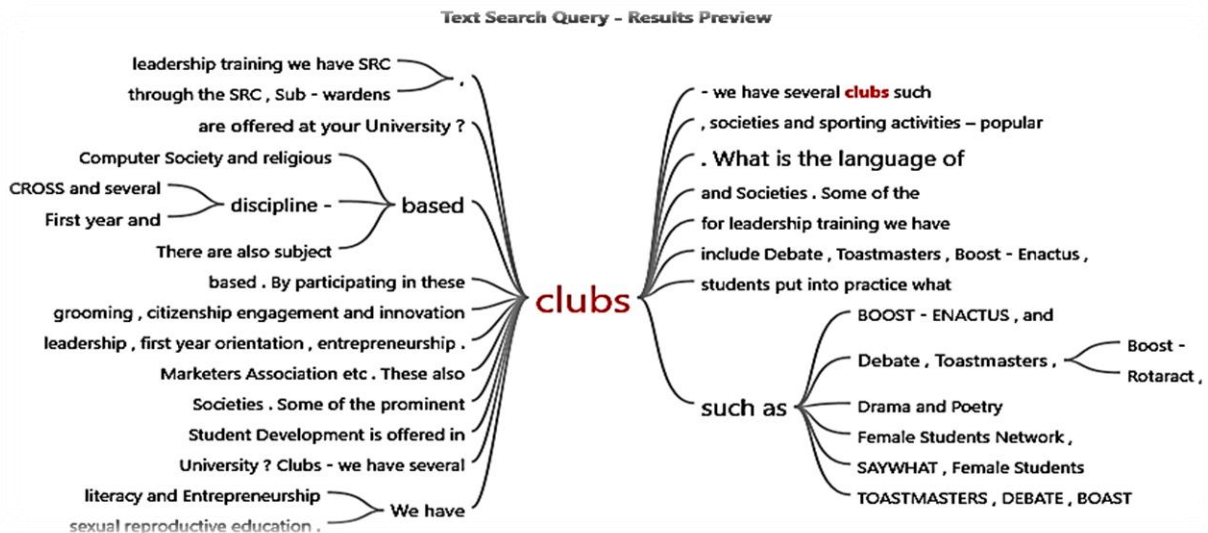
6. Which student development programmes are offered at your University?

The present study enquired from the SAPs about the student development programs that were offered by their universities. The extracted tree map shows that a myriad of SD programs were offered by the universities. However, the top three themes that emerged from the enquiry included clubs, leadership and debate.

clubs	debate	saywhat	network	leos	peer		
	enactus	toastmasters	boost	based	international	red	
leadership	rotaract	female	educators	cross	association	discipline	health

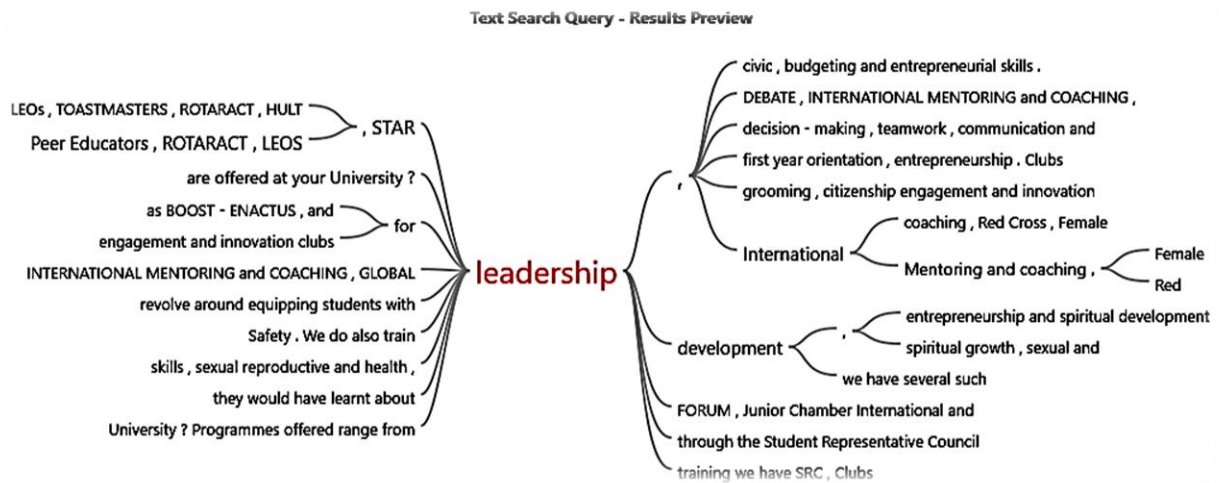
## Clubs

The word 'clubs' was the most discussed theme, which was mentioned by 11 out of the 12 SAPs for 18 times. The word tree output diagram below shows what the SAPs actually said about clubs.



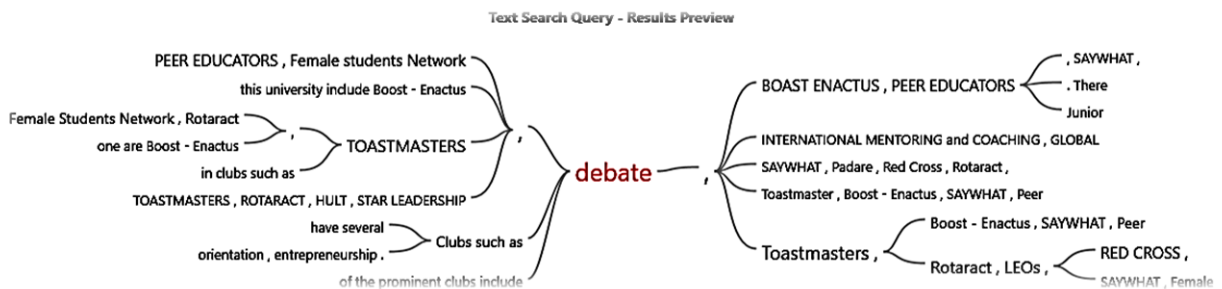
## Leadership

The leadership theme was discussed by 8 SAPs for 14 times and emerged as the second most discussed theme.



## Debate

The word debate was discussed by 12 SAPs for 12 times. Hence, it emerged as the third most discussed theme.



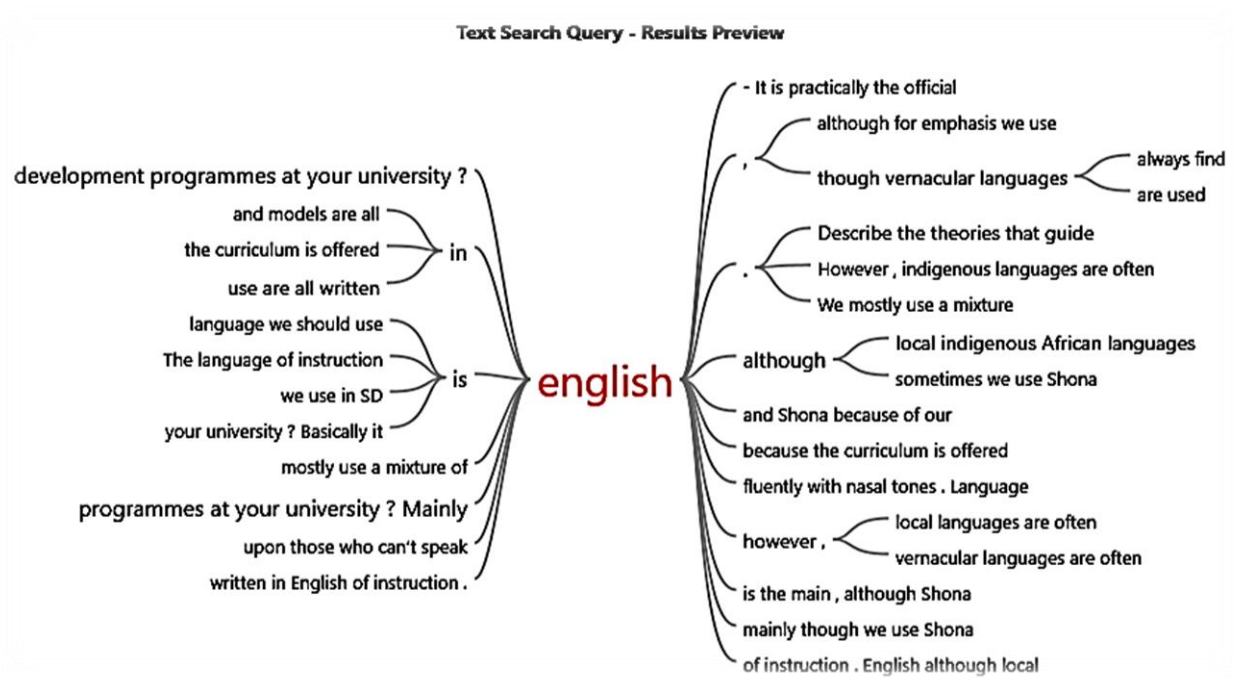
7. What is the language of your instruction in the student development programmes at your university?

A word cloud of the SAPs' verbatim responses to the enquiry on the language of instruction in SD programs at their universities was extracted. The top 3 themes that emerged included English, Shona and indigenous.



## English

English emerged as the most discussed theme by the SAPs, which was mentioned by 11 respondents for 19 times. Below is the word tree output diagram showing how they used the word English in their responses.

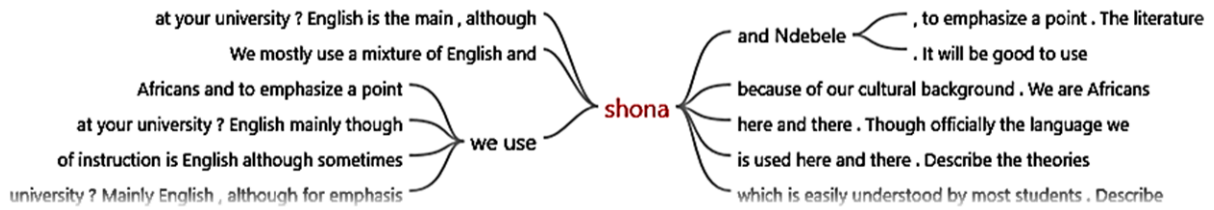


## Shona

The word Shona was mentioned by 4 SAPs for 6 times. Hence, it emerged as the second most discussed theme. A word tree output diagram of the SAPs responses centred around the word Shona was extracted.



**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Indigenous**

The third most discussed theme by the SAPs was the word indigenous, which was mentioned by 3 respondents for 5 times. The word tree output for the word indigenous was subsequently extracted.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



8. Describe the theories that guide SD at your institution?

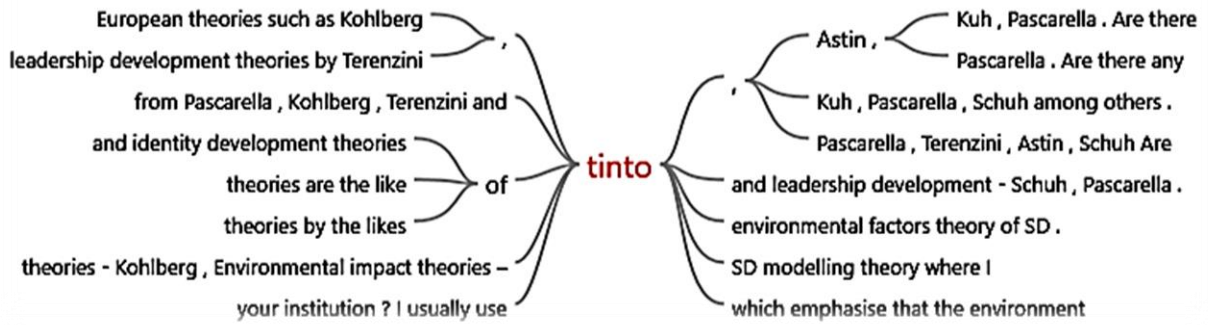
The SAPs were asked about the specific theories that guided SD at their institutions. A word cloud of their verbatim responses was extracted. Three top themes that emerged included Pascarella, Tinto and leadership.



**Tinto**

The word Tinto was mentioned by 8 SAPs for 8 times. It was the top theme that emerged from the SAPs verbatim responses.

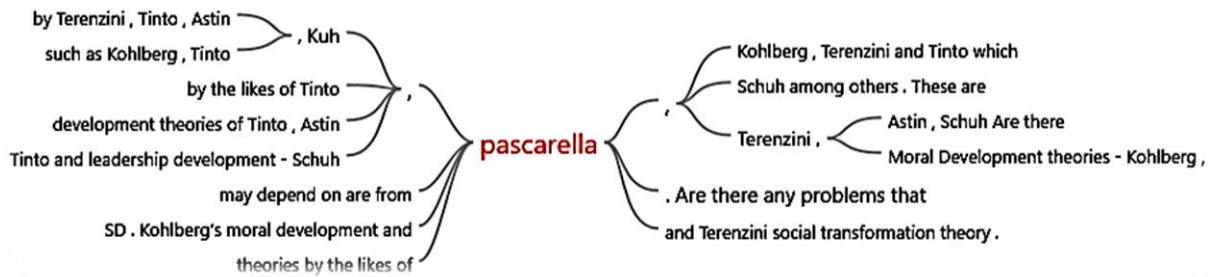
**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Pascarella**

The Pascarella theme was mentioned by 7 SAPs for 8 times. It emerged as the second most discussed theme. Word tree output diagram below.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Leadership**

Leadership emerged as the third most discussed theme, which was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 5 times.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



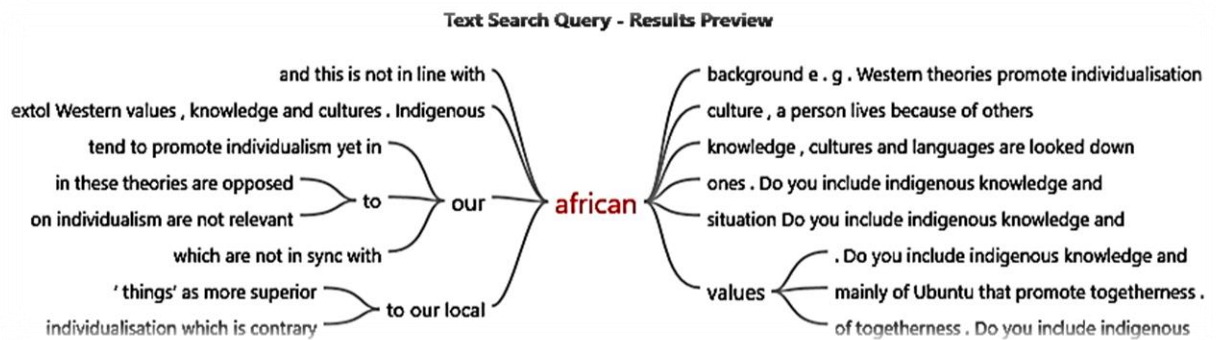
9. Are there any problems that you encounter when using these?

The SAPs were asked if they encountered any problems as they used some theories in their SD programs. Two key themes emerged from the SAPs' verbatim responses namely values and African.



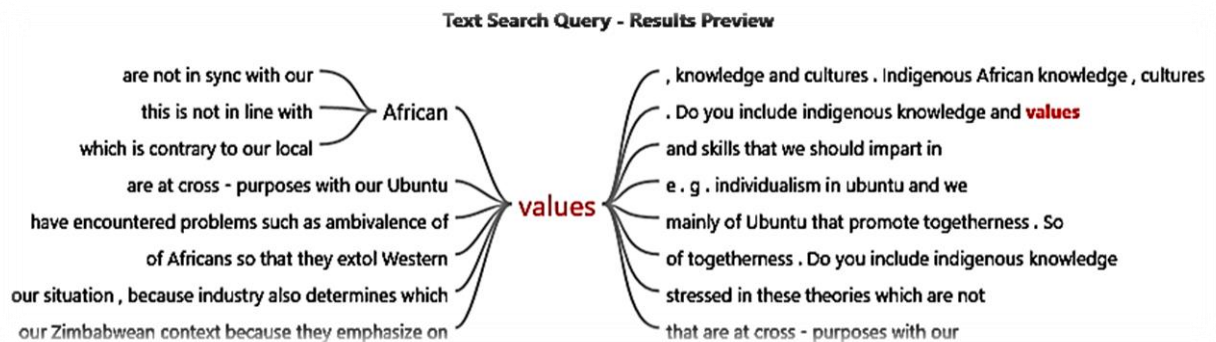
## African

African was the most discussed theme, which was mentioned by 8 SAPS for 9 times.



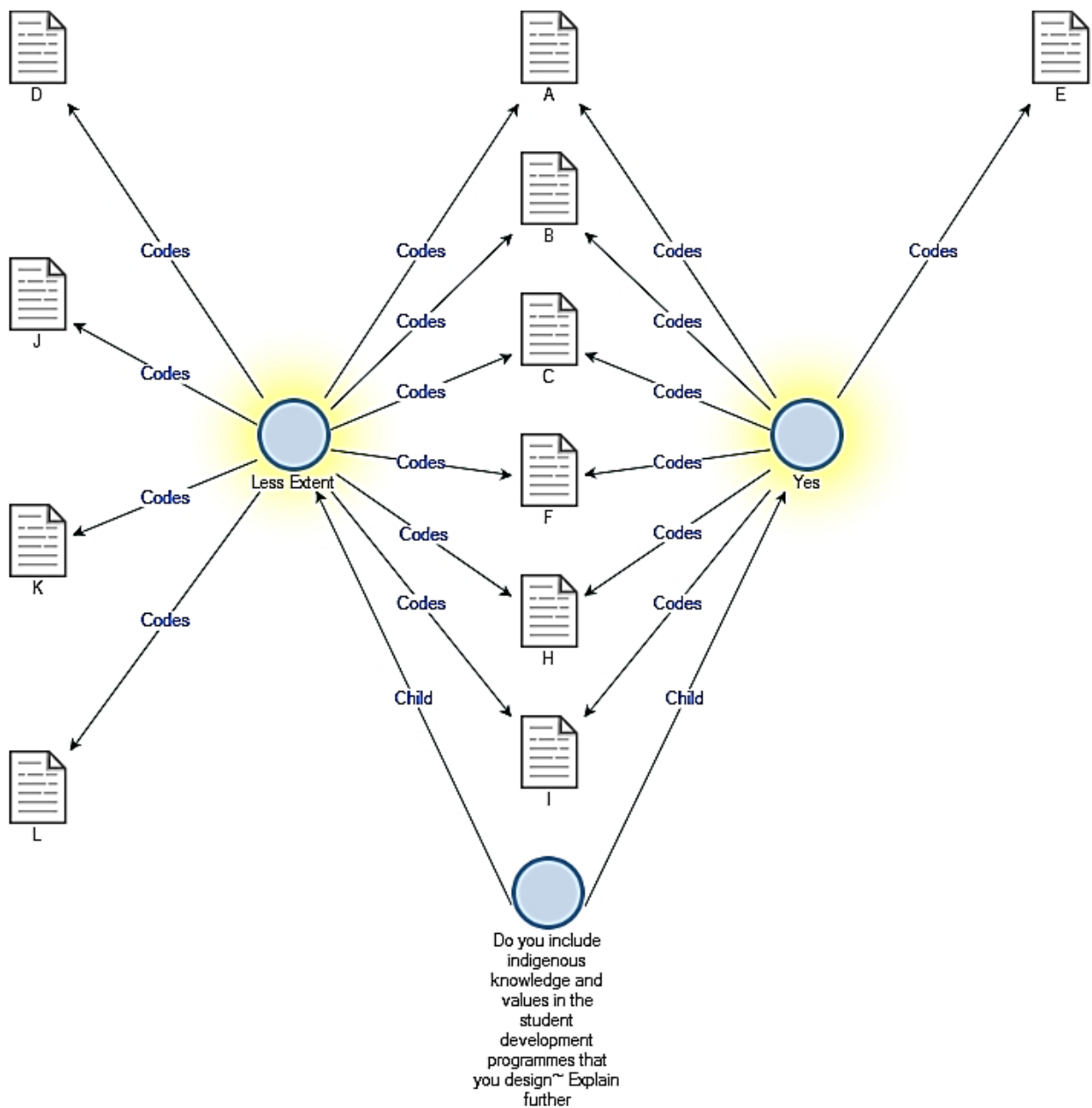
## Values

The values theme was the second top theme, which was mentioned by 8 SAPs for 8 times.

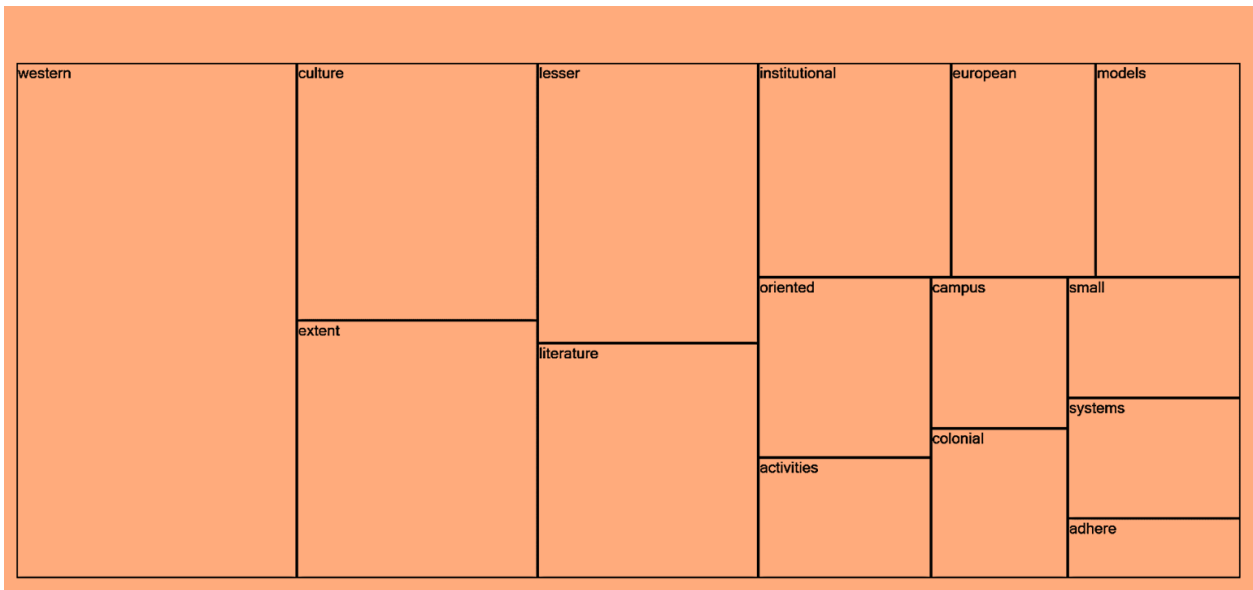


10. Do you include indigenous knowledge and values in the student development programmes that you design? Explain further

The SAPs' responses were initially coded under two emerging themes namely less extent and yes. A comparison diagram was extracted to pictorially outline the SAPs' responses. Out of the 11 SAPs who responded to the question, 6 indicated that yes, they included indigenous knowledge and values in designing SD programs, though to a lesser extent (A, B, C, F, H, I). However, only 4 of the respondents said that they applied them to a lesser extent (D, J, K, L). On the other hand, just one respondent's response was an absolute yes (E).

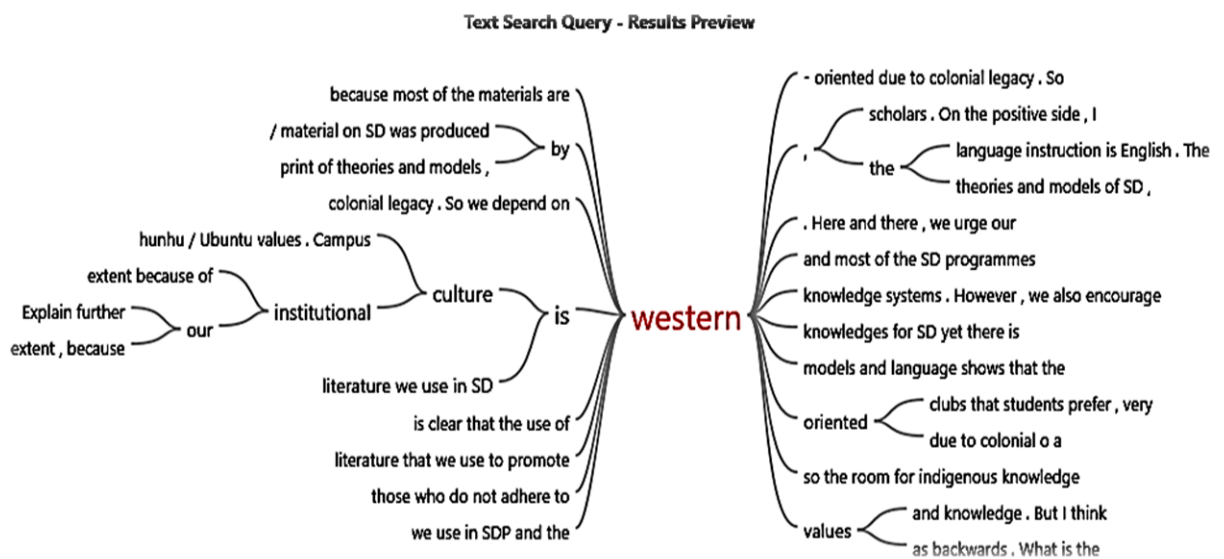


A tree map was extracted from the verbatim responses of the SAPs who indicated that they incorporated indigenous knowledge and values to a less extent in SD programs designing. Three top themes that emerged included western, culture and extent.



### Western

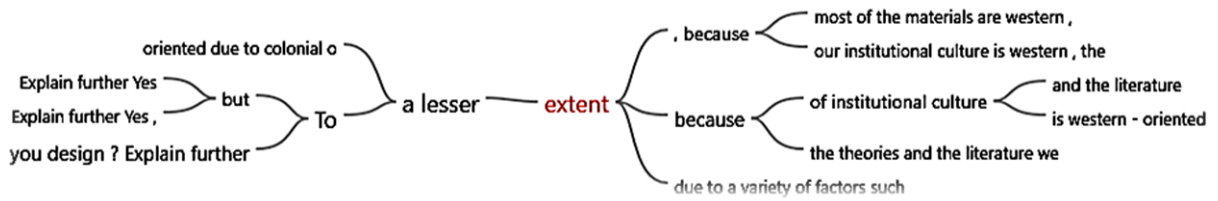
The word Western was discussed by 9 SAPs for 14 times. Hence, it emerged as the top theme.



### Extent

The word extent was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 6 times. As a result, it was the second most discussed theme.

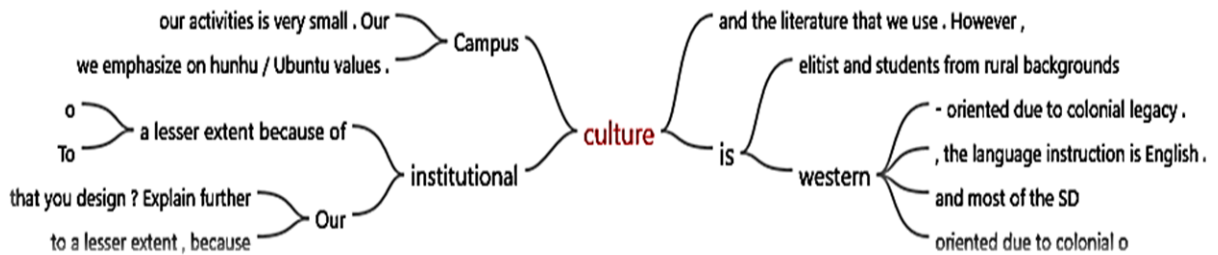
Text Search Query - Results Preview



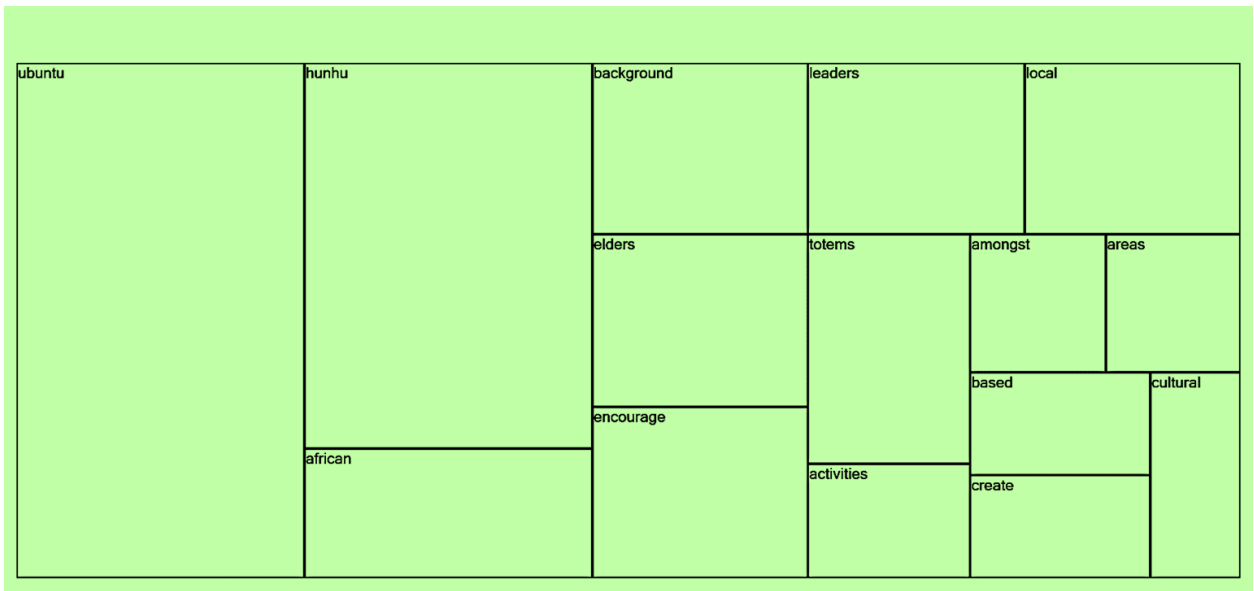
## Culture

Culture was the third most discussed theme, which was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 6 times.

Text Search Query - Results Preview

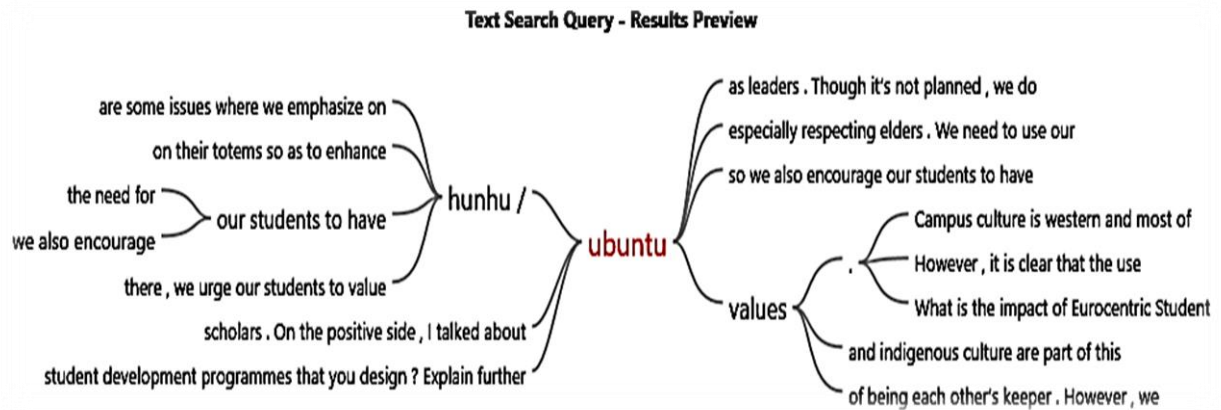


Another tree map of the verbatim responses of SAPs who highlighted that they incorporated indigenous knowledge and values in designing their SD programs. Two key themes namely ubuntu and hunhu emerged.



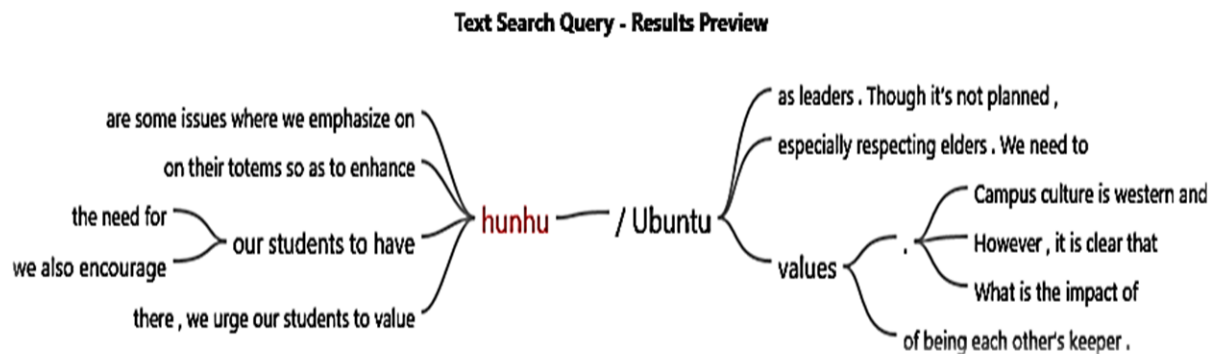
## Ubuntu

Ubuntu was the most discussed word, which was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 8 times.



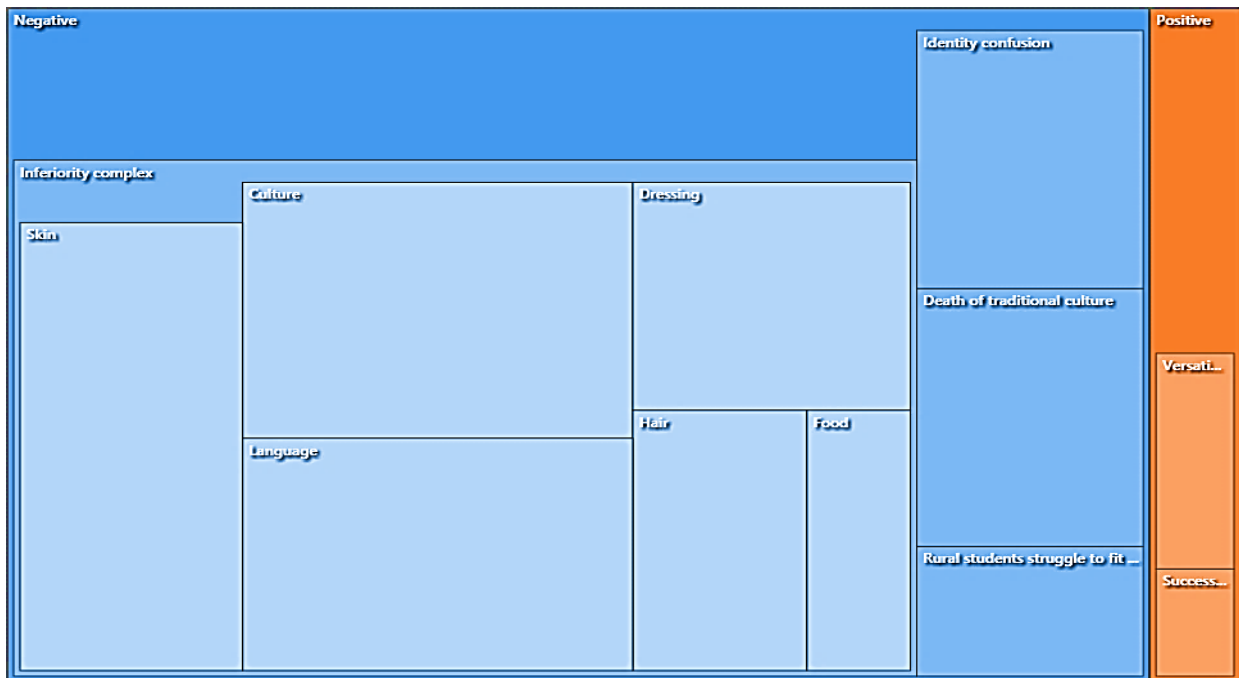
### Hunhu/ubuntu

Hunhu/ubuntu was the second most discussed word among SAPs who incorporated indigenous knowledge and values in designing SD programs. It was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 6 times.



### 11. What is the impact of Eurocentric Student Development programmes on students?

The SAPs' responses to this question were initially classified under positive and negative codes. The majority of the respondents perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programs on students as negative, whilst only a few saw a positive impact. Key themes that emerged from the responses of the SAPs who perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programs on students as negative included inferiority complex, identity confusion, death of traditional culture and struggling of rural students to fit in. The inferiority complex theme had 6 sub-themes that emerged under it namely skin, culture, language, dressing, hair and food. On the other hand, only two themes emerged from the responses of the SAPs who perceived the impact of Eurocentric SD programs on students as positive. These included versatility and successful graduates. The hierarchy chart showing the development of these codes and themes is shown below.



The top three sub-themes that emerged under the main inferiority complex theme are discussed in detail henceforth.

### Skin

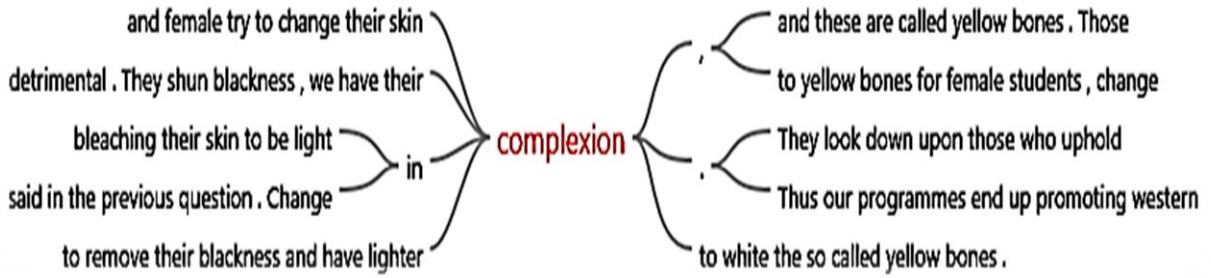
The skin sub-theme was mentioned by 9 SAPs for 11 times. Hence, it emerged as the most discussed sub-theme under the subject of inferiority complex. A word cloud of the verbatim responses of the SAPs who discussed issues pertaining to skin was extracted. Three issues were the most discussed namely complexion, blackness and bones.



The word complexion was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 5 times.

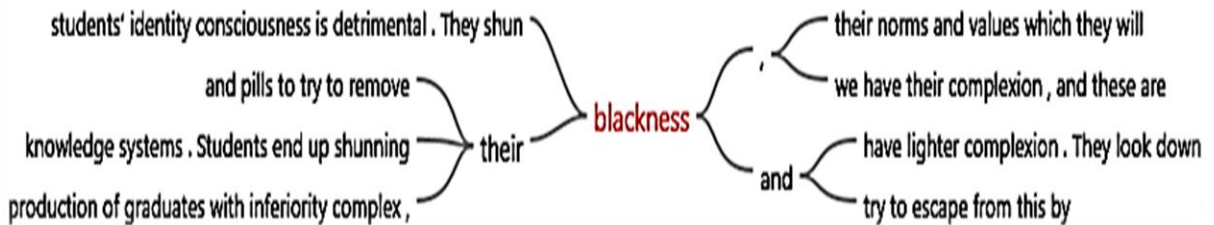


**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



The word blackness was discussed by 4 SAPs for 4 times.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



The word bones was mentioned by 4 SAPs for 4 times.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**

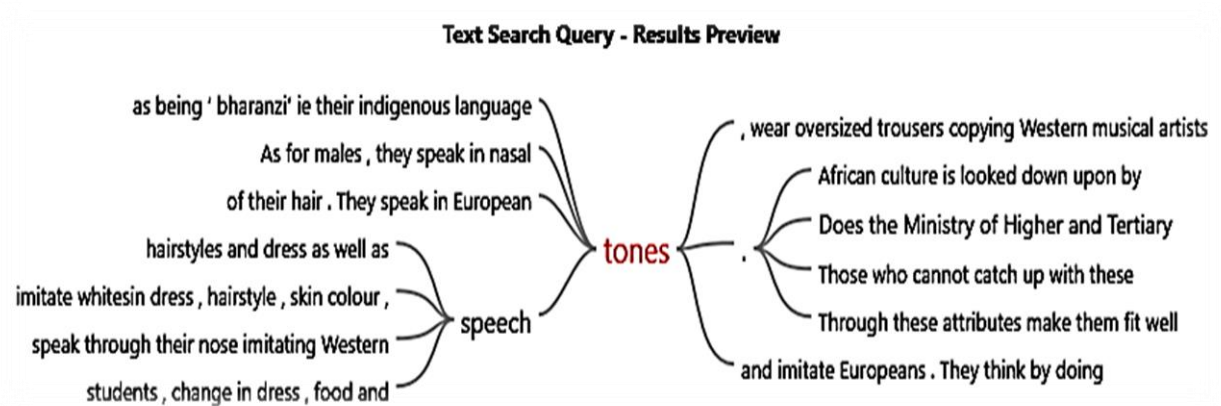


## Language

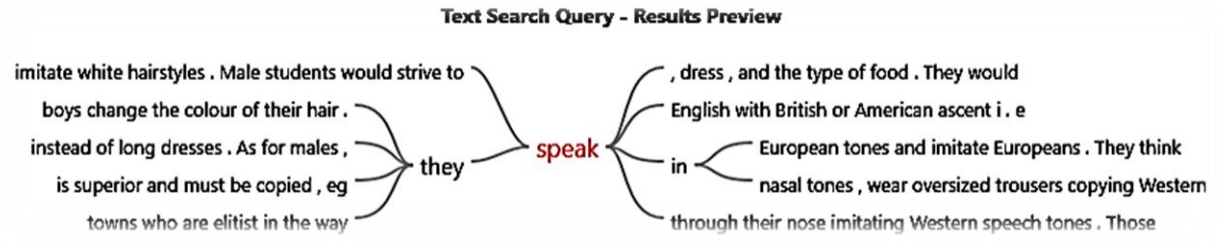
Language emerged as the second most discussed sub-theme, which was mentioned by 9 SAPs for 10 times. A word cloud of their verbatim responses was extracted and two main issues were discussed in relation to tones and speak.



The issue of tones was the most discussed as it was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 7 times.



The word speak was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 5 times. Hence, it was the second most discussed issue under the language sub-theme.

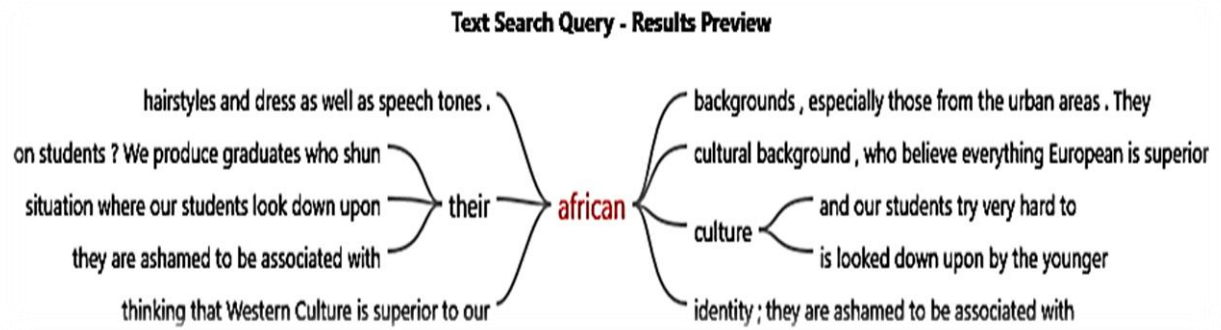


## Culture

Culture emerged as the third most discussed sub-theme under the inferiority complex theme. It was mentioned 8 SAPs for 11 times. A word cloud of their verbatim responses was extracted. Two main issues were discussed in relation to African and cultural.

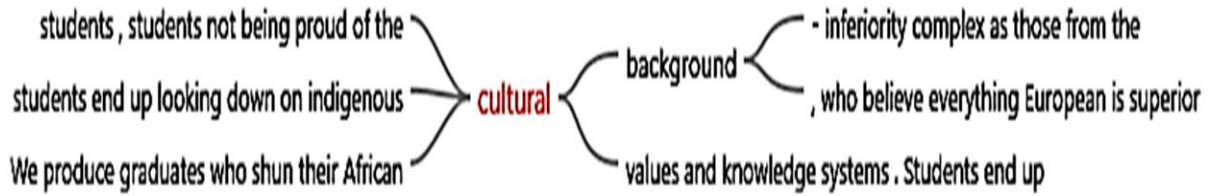


The word African was discussed by 4 SAPs for 5 times.



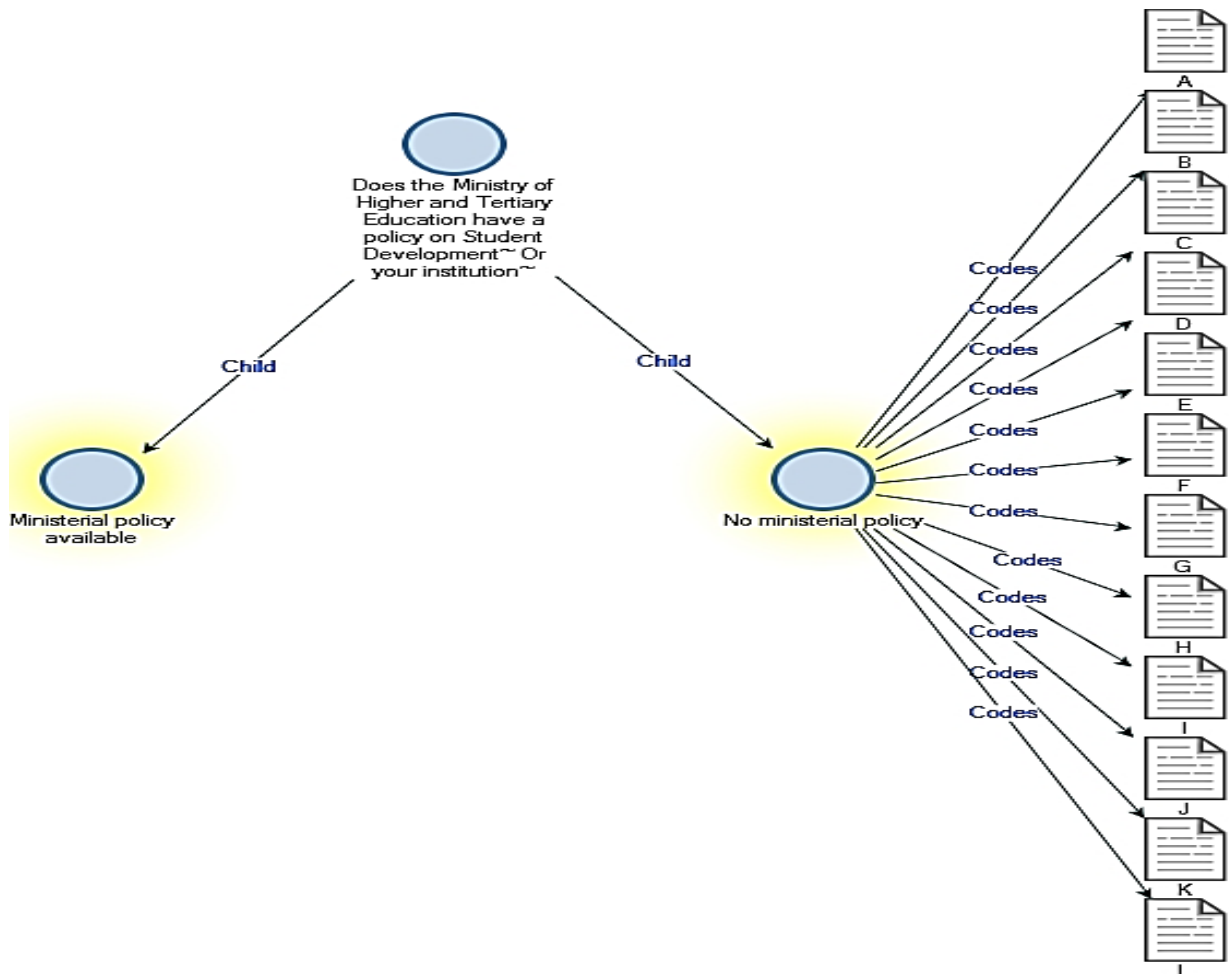
Cultural was mentioned by 3 SAPs for 3 times.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview



12. Does the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education have a policy on Student Development? Or your institution?

The SAPs were initially asked if the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education had a policy on SD. Their responses were classified into Ministerial policy available and no ministerial policy codes. A comparative diagram was extracted to show their responses. All of the SAPs indicated that no ministerial policy on was available in Zimbabwe.

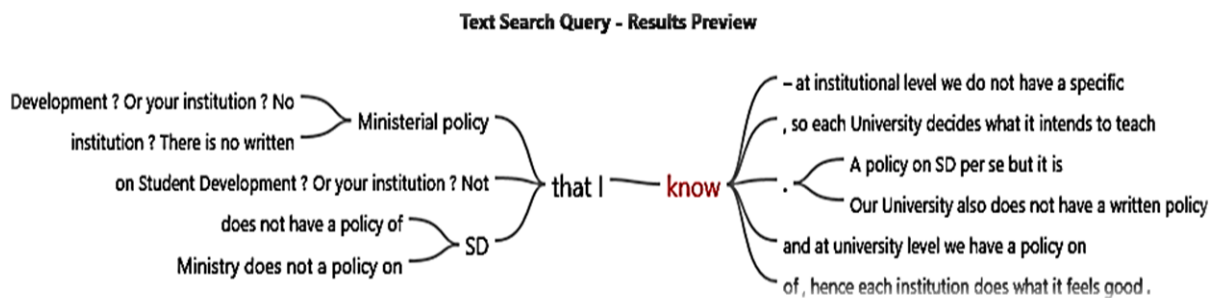


A word cloud of their verbatim responses was subsequently extracted, from which 3 key themes namely know, ministerial and aware emerged.



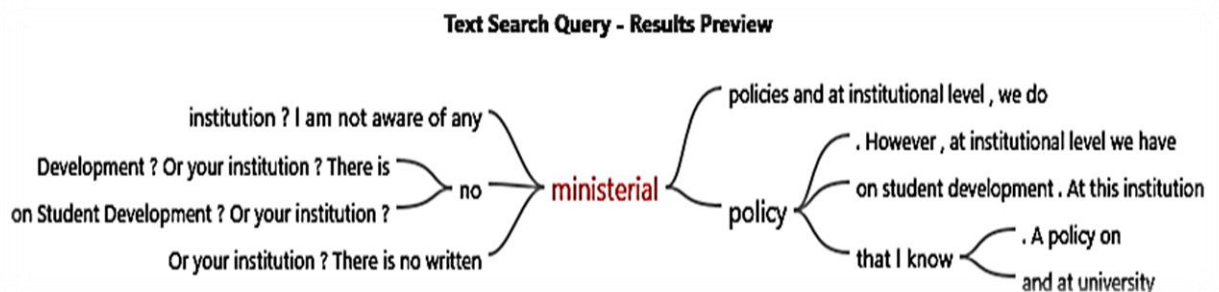
### Know

Know emerged as the top theme which was mentioned by 6 SAPs for 6 times.



### Ministerial

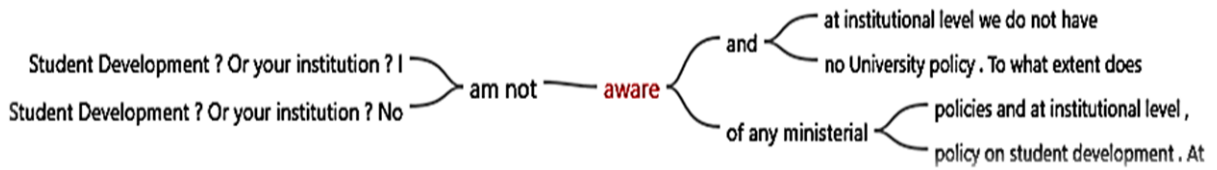
Ministerial was the second most discussed theme that was mentioned by 5 SAPs for 5 times.



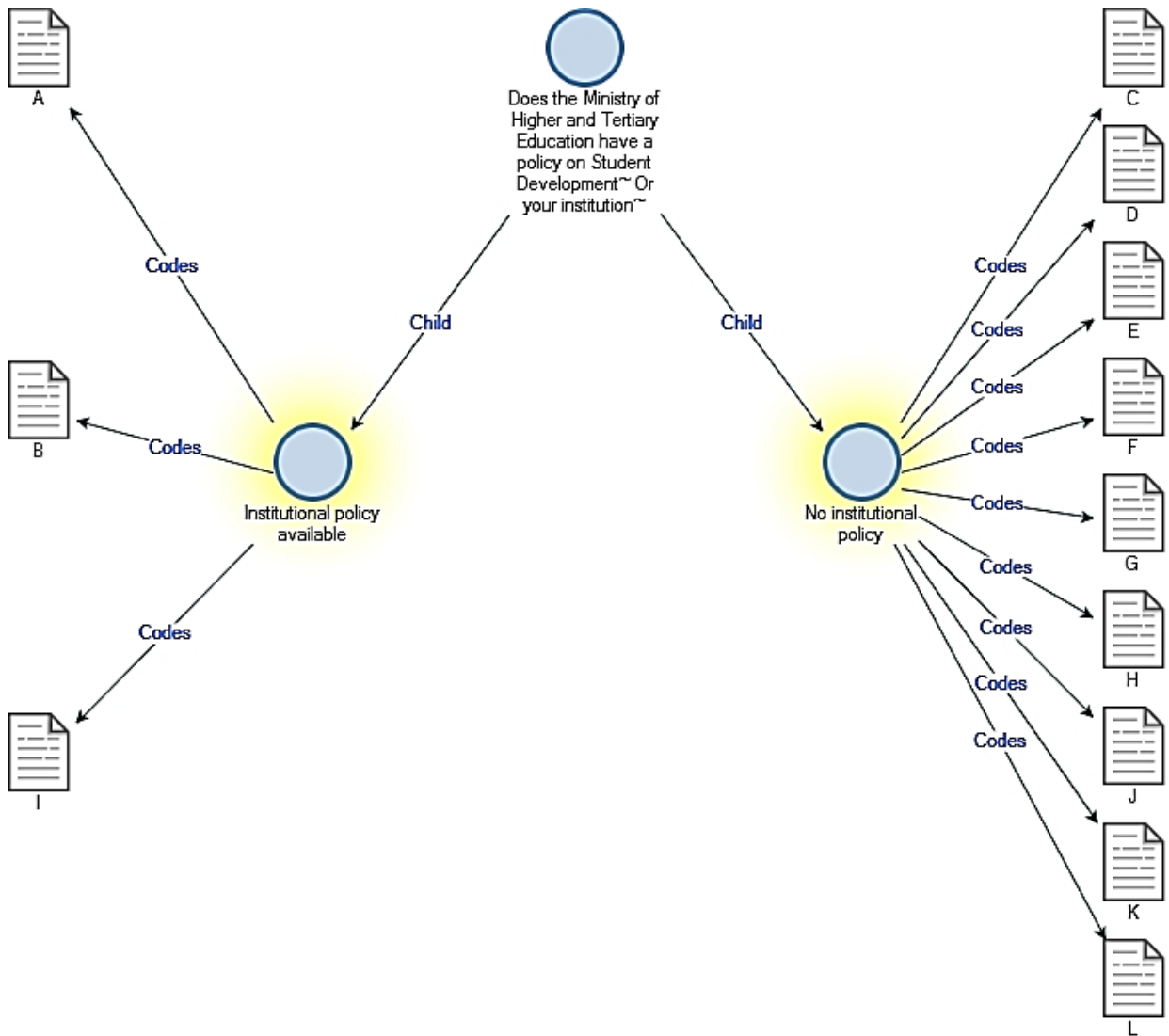
### Aware

Aware was the third most discussed theme mentioned by 4 SAPs for 4 times.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



The SAPs were also asked if their institutions had policies on SD. Their responses were coded under the institutional policy available and no institutional policy codes. A comparison diagram was subsequently extracted to show their responses to the enquiry. Only 3 SAPs highlighted that policies on SD were available at their institutions, whilst the majority revealed that they had no SD policies at their institutions.



A word cloud of the majority of the SAPs who had indicated that no institutional policy on SD was available was extracted, and the main issue discussed had to do with documents.



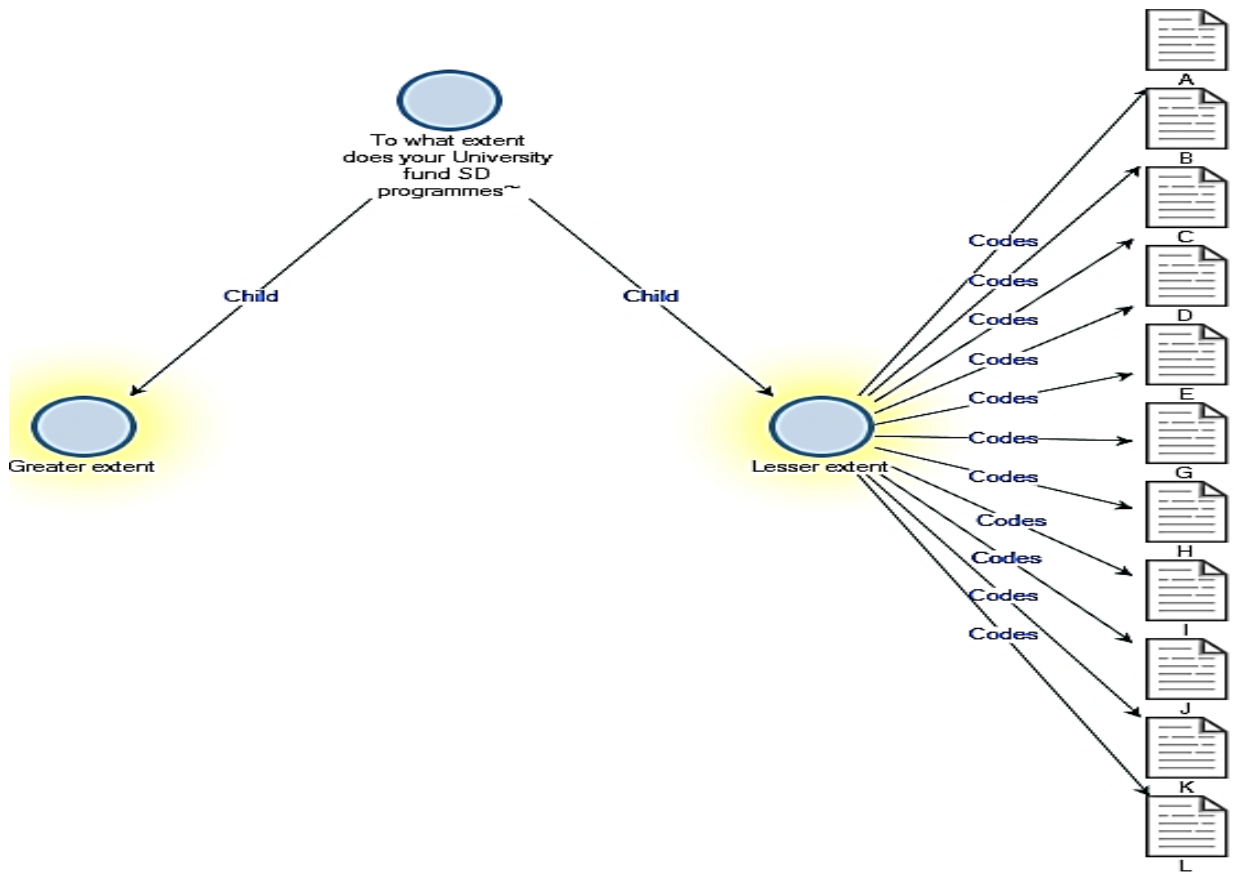
The word documents was discussed by 4 SAPs for 4 times.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview



13. To what extent does your University fund SD programmes?

The study enquired the extent to which universities funded SD programs from the SAPs. Their responses were classified under the greater extent and lesser extent codes, from which a comparative diagram was extracted. All the SAPs highlighted that universities funded SD programs to a lesser extent.



A word cloud of their verbatim responses was extracted. Three top themes emerged namely external, corporates and funding.

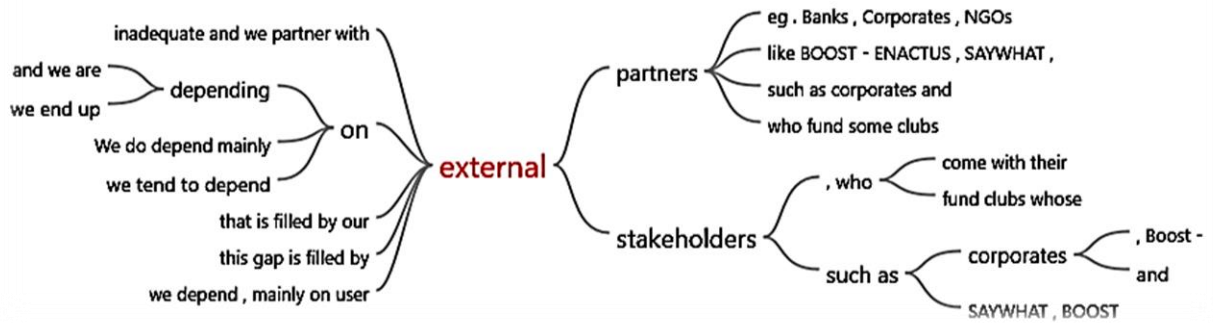


**External**

The word external was the most discussed. It was mentioned by 9 SAPs for 10 times.



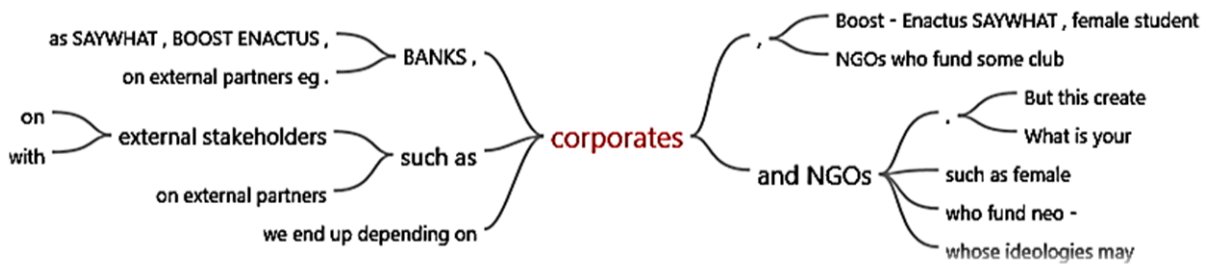
Text Search Query - Results Preview



### Corporates

Corporates was the second most discussed theme which was mentioned by 7 SAPs for 7 times.

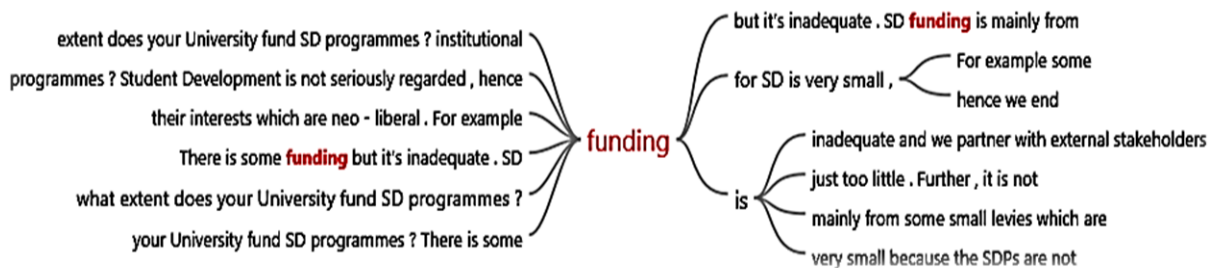
Text Search Query - Results Preview



### Funding

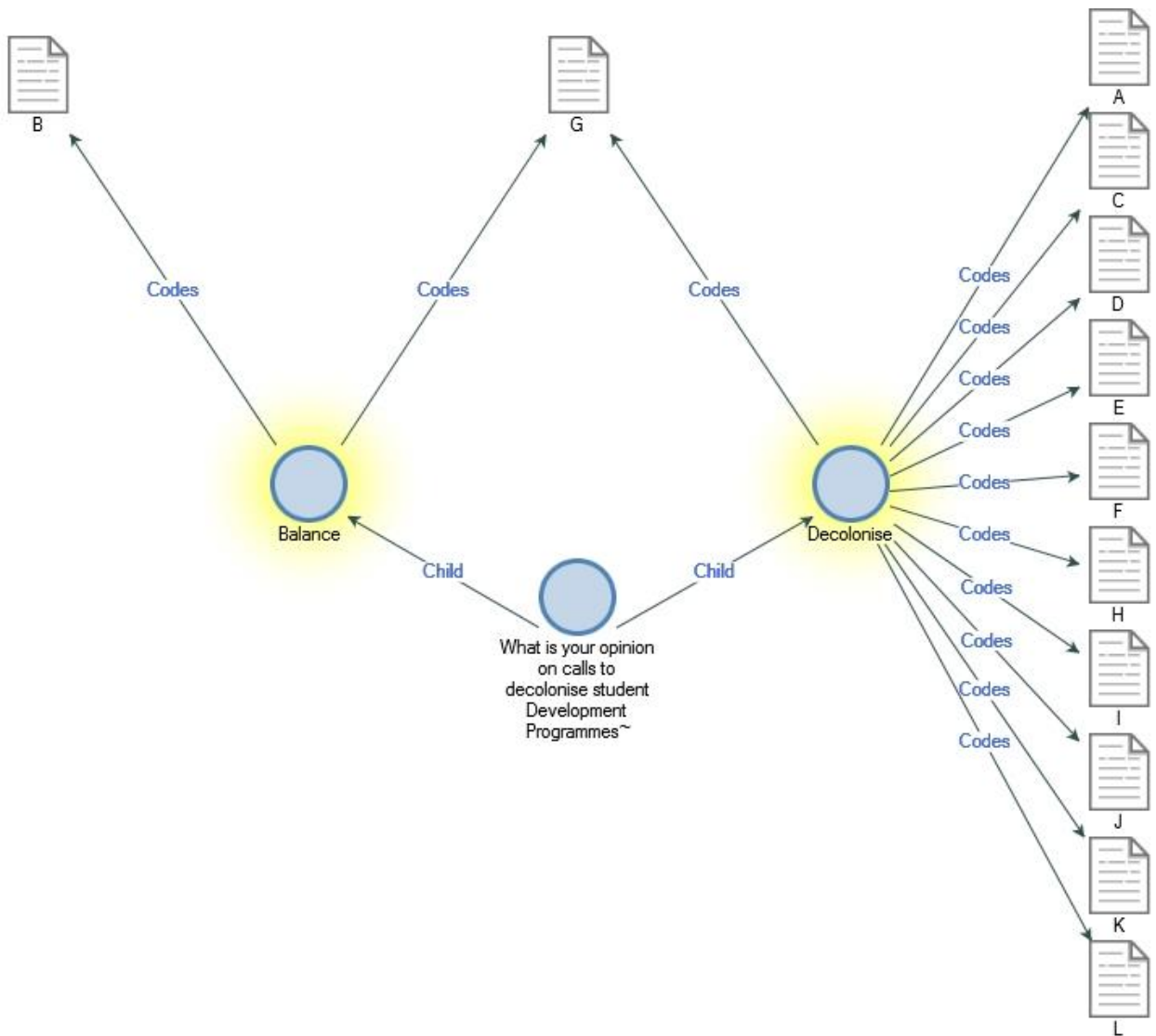
Funding was the third most discussed theme mentioned by 6 SAPs 7 times.

Text Search Query - Results Preview

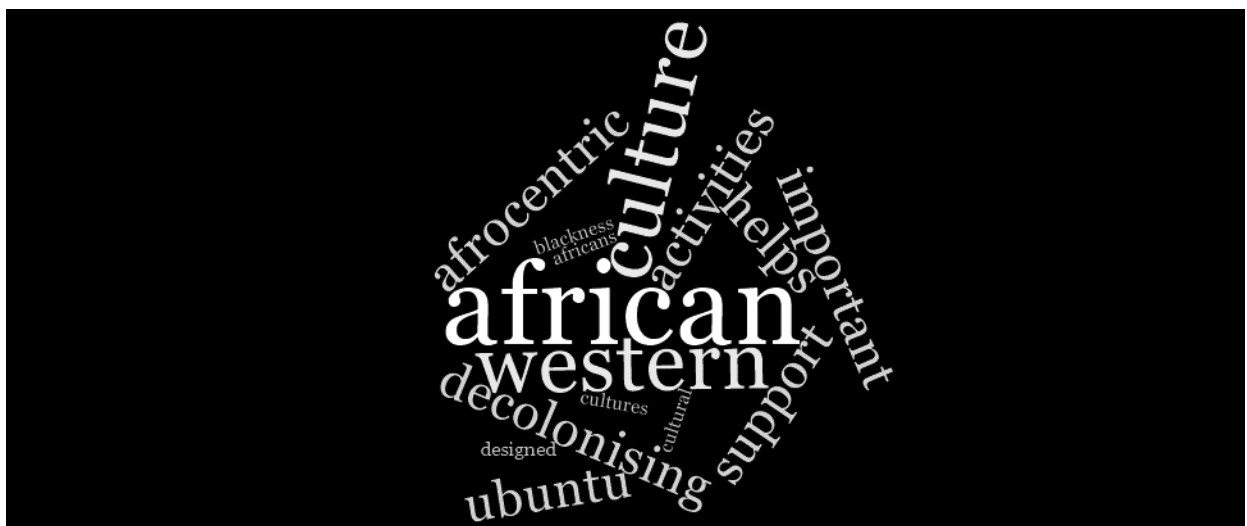


14. What is your opinion on calls to decolonize student Development Programmes?

The SAPs’ responses were classified into two main codes namely balance and decolonize. The majority (10) of the SAPs called for the total decolonization of SD programs. However, only 1 of the SAPs believed in striking a balance. Despite agreeing that there was a need to decolonize SD programs, one (1) respondent also believed that there was need to strike a balance.



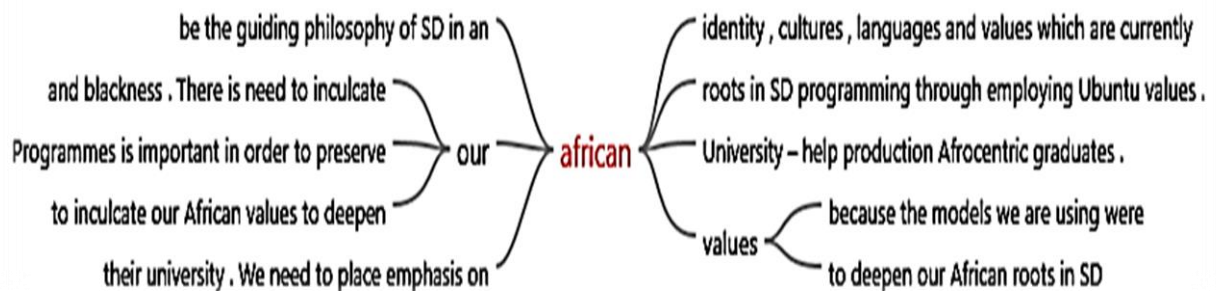
A word cloud of the verbatim responses of the SAPs who believed in the decolonization of SD programs was extracted. Three key themes emerged namely African, culture and Western.



## African

The word African emerged as the top theme, which was mentioned by 4 SAPs for 5 times.

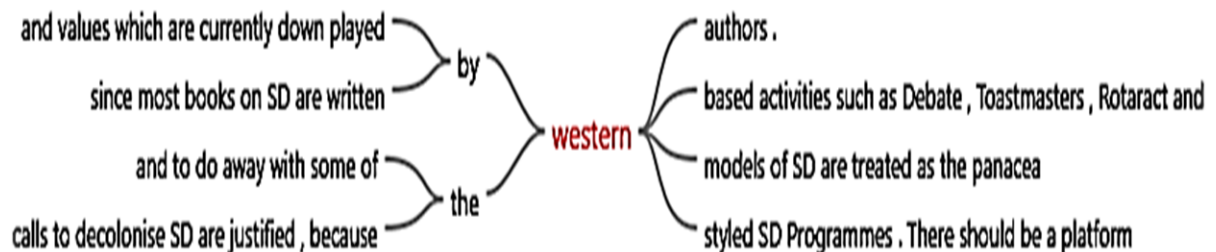
### Text Search Query - Results Preview



## Western

Western was the second most discussed theme mentioned by 4 SAPs for 4 times.

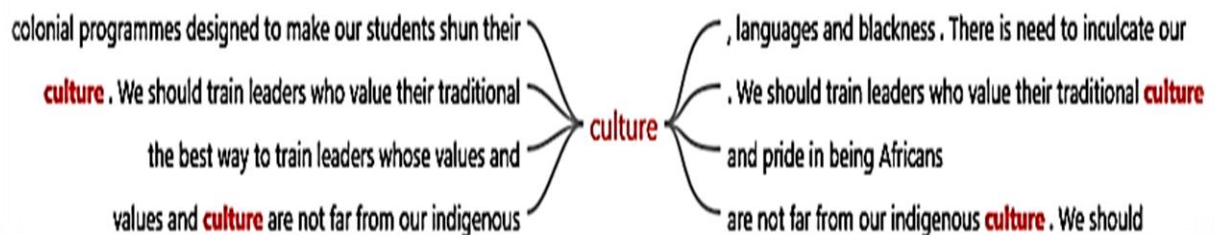
### Text Search Query - Results Preview



## Culture

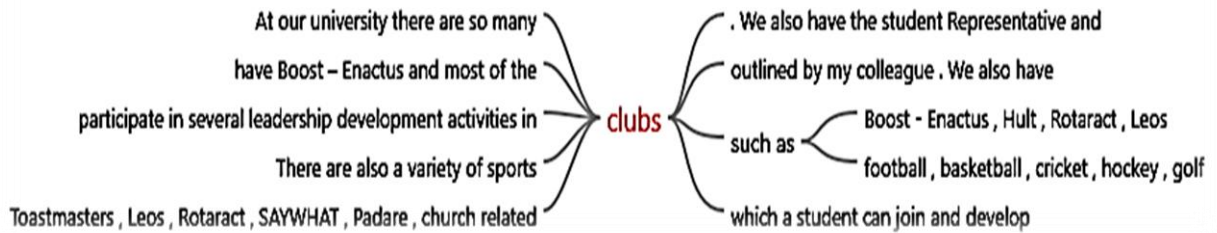
Culture was the third most discussed theme mentioned by 2 SAPs for 4 times.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview





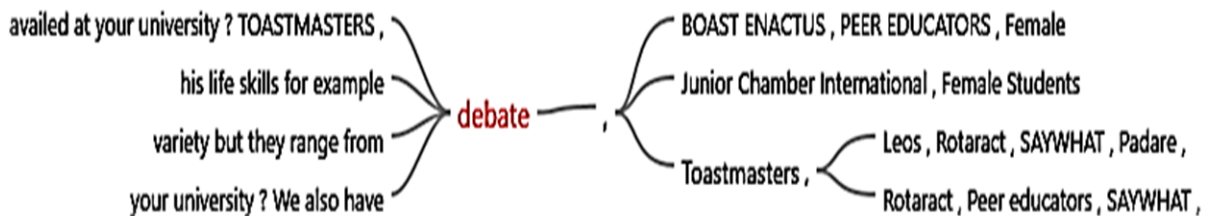
**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



**Debate**

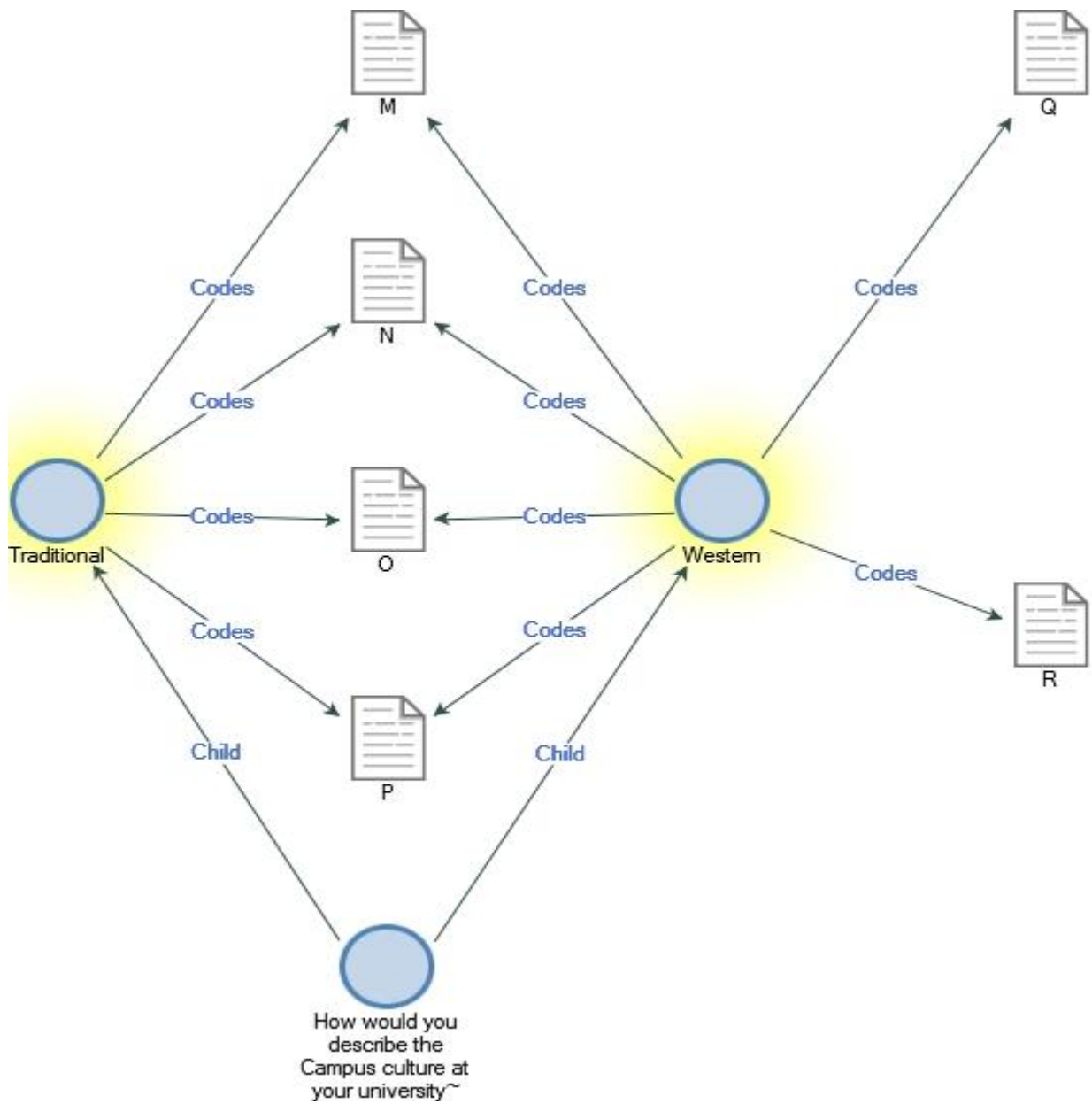
Debate was the third most discussed theme that was mentioned by 4 SLs for 4 times.

**Text Search Query - Results Preview**



2. How would you describe the campus culture at your university? Afrocentric or Eurocentric or elitist?

The SLs’ responses were initially grouped into traditional (Afrocentric) and Western (Eurocentric) codes. A comparison diagram was extracted to see how each of the respondents perceived the campus culture at their respective universities. Four of the SLs believed that the culture at their universities was a mixture of traditional and western cultures. However, only 2 SLs (Q and R) perceived their respective universities’ campus culture as purely western.

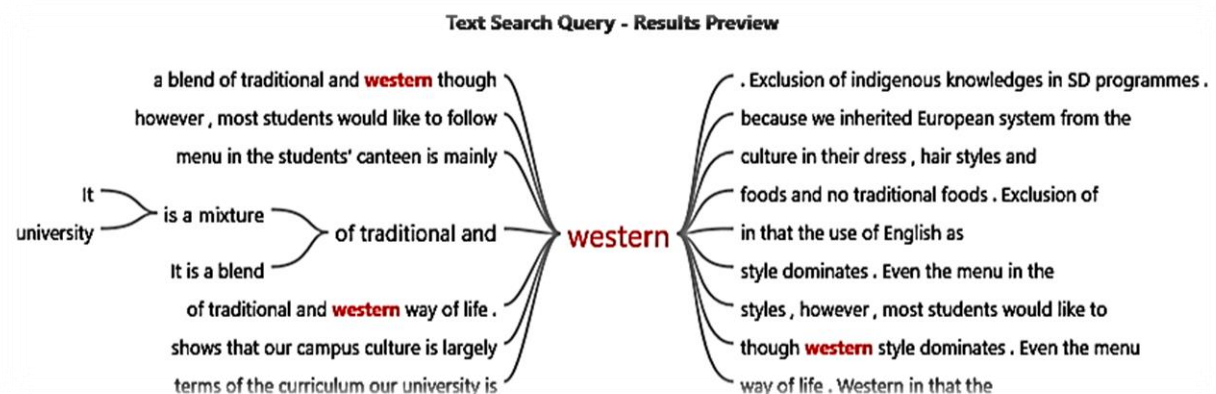


A tree map of the SLs' verbatim responses to this question was extracted. The main themes that emerged were western and traditional.

western	traditional	foods	popular	shows
		mixture	sports	styles
	blend			administrators

## Western

The word western emerged as the top theme, which was mentioned by 5 SLs for 9 times.



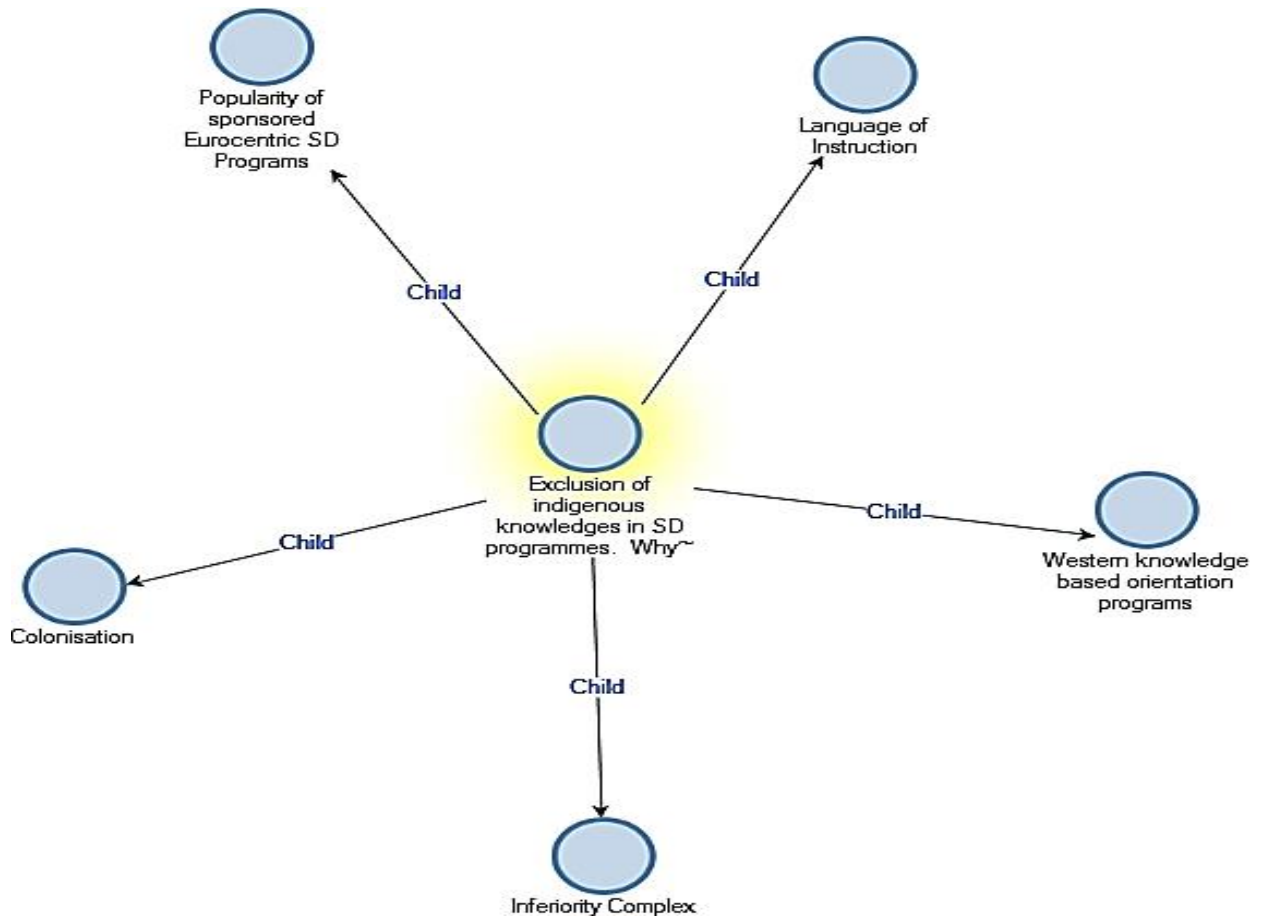
## Traditional

Traditional was the second most discussed theme, which was mentioned by 3 SLs for 4 times.



3. Most SD programmes offered in our universities do not include indigenous knowledges. Why do you think they are excluded?

SLs were asked their opinions on why most SD programs offered at universities exclude indigenous knowledges. An exploratory diagram of the themes that emerged from this enquiry was extracted. The five themes that emerged included language of instruction; western knowledge-based orientation programs, inferiority complex, colonization and popularity of sponsored Eurocentric SD programs.



The word frequency analysis of the emerging themes was done in the table below.



<b>Emerging Theme</b>	<b>Number of Student Leaders who Mentioned the Same Theme</b>
	<b>n=6</b>
Language of Instruction	2
Inferiority Complex	2
Colonization	1
Western knowledge-based orientation programs	1
Popularity of Eurocentric SD Programs	1

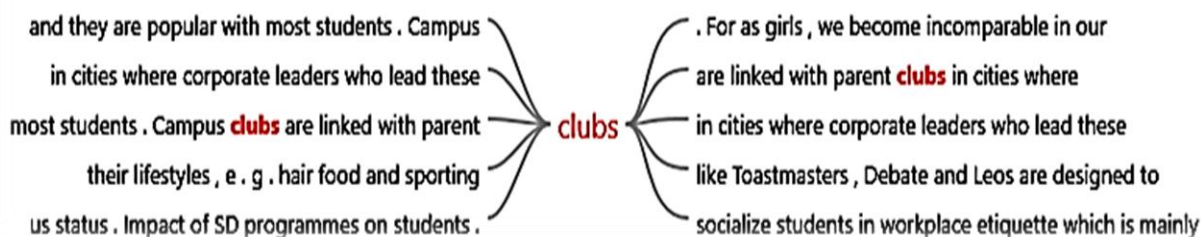
Language of instruction and inferiority complex were the top themes, which were each mentioned by 2 of the SLs. The least discussed themes included colonization, western knowledge-based orientation programs and popularity of Eurocentric SD programs.

#### 4. What is the impact of SD programmes on the growth and development of students?

A hierarchy chart of the SLs' responses to the enquiry on the impact of SD programs on the growth and development of student was extracted. Their responses had initially been classified under the positive and negative codes. The majority of the SLs perceived the effect of SD programs as negative, whilst only a few had positive things to say about the SD programs. The themes that emerged under negative effects was that if inferiority complex, pressure on rural students, identity confusion, death of indigenous culture and death of indigenous languages. Positive effects mentioned included workplace diversity and freedom of choice of lifestyle.



### Text Search Query - Results Preview



## Hair

The sub-theme hair was mentioned by 2 SLs for 5 times. Therefore, they emerged as the second most discussed sub-theme under the main inferiority complex theme.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview



## Change

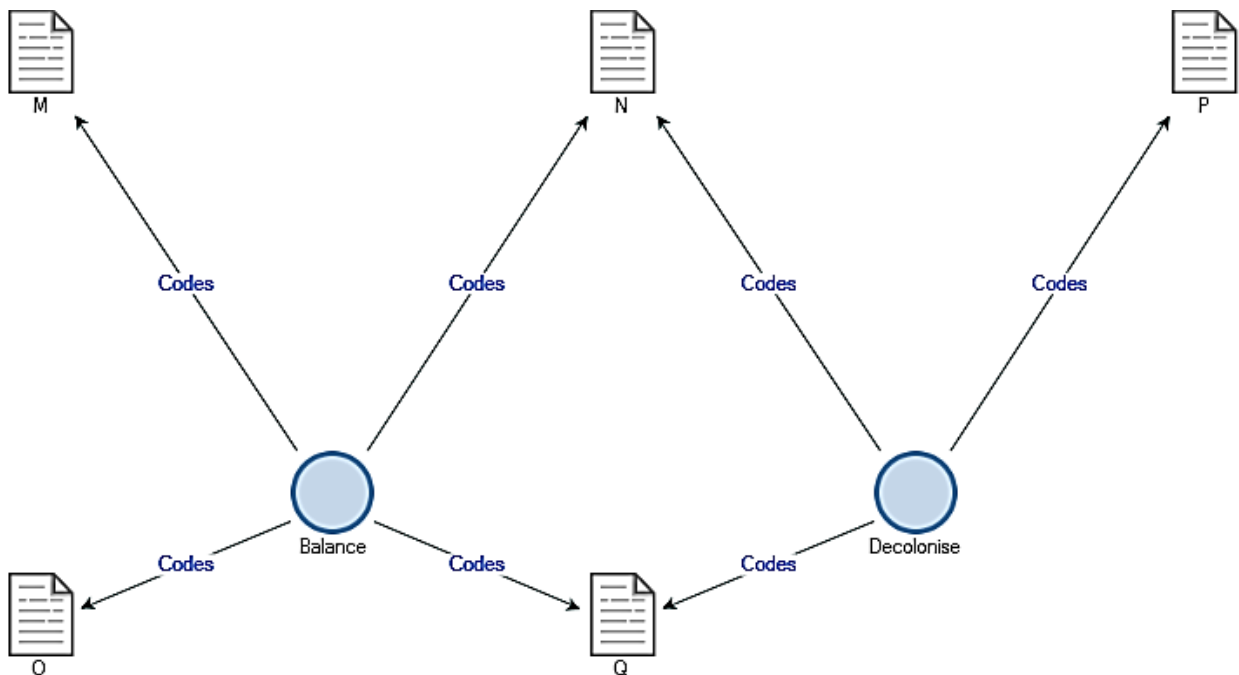
Change was mentioned by 2 SLs for 4 times, emerging as the third most discussed sub-theme under the main theme of inferiority complex.

### Text Search Query - Results Preview



5. What are your views on decolonizing SD programmes/ inclusion of indigenous knowledge into SD?

SLs were probed their views on decolonizing SD programs or the inclusion of indigenous knowledge into SD. Their responses were initially classified into balance and decolonize codes. The comparative diagram below shows their views on the subject under probe.



Only 5 out of the 6 SLs responded to the question. Two of the SLs (M and O) strictly called for universities to strike a balance. Only one SL (P) called for the total decolonization of SD programs. However, SLs N and Q called for both delocolonization of SD programs as well as striking a balance. In total, 4 of the SLs (M, O, N and Q), who comprised the majority of the respondents believed in striking a balance in the implementation of SD programs.