

**THE DYNAMICS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER ENTRY INTO TEACHER
EDUCATION: STUDENT TEACHER SELECTION INTO TEACHER TRAINING
COLLEGES IN ZIMBABWE.**

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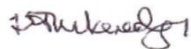
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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION in the School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Design at the Durban University of Technology.

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DECLARATION

I, Bernard Berejena, declare that:

The work presented in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my own, and has not been presented for any degree work in another university.

Where use has been made of the work of others, it is acknowledged in the text.

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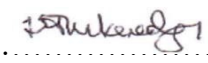
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ABSTRACT

The world over, selecting pre-service teachers for training represents a critical stage of teacher education. The process is meant to ensure that suitable candidates join the teaching profession, strengthen the teaching workforce and enhance education quality. However, discourse on student teacher selection into teacher training worldwide has raised numerous questions regarding whom to select and how to select. To date, there seems to be no consensus on selection criteria, mediational tools and rules for student selection into initial teacher education.

This study sought to understand student teacher selection into four selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. Through a multiple-site case study involving the selected teacher training colleges, a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm was adopted. A multi-modal approach to data generation which involved focus group discussions, interviews and observations of live student selection interviews was employed. Data were transcribed and manually analysed inductively utilising open coding. Drawing on the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and the Funnel Theory to unpack, understand and describe data, I argue that pre-service teacher selection into teacher training programmes involves many complex and convoluted processes.

The findings suggest that mediational tools used in student teacher selection into teacher education in Zimbabwe combine psychological (language, knowledge, experiences and signs), and material tools (databases, SMS, written tests, interview schedules, interviews, print media, social media and word of mouth).

The rules that guide student teacher selection into the four selected teacher training colleges include college guidelines, minimum requirements, academic performance, student teacher attributes, Public Service Regulations and quality assurance.

Stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies in various ways. Prospective students apply and attend selection interviews, and some unsuccessful candidates pay fees without the offer of vacancies. Government officials respond by submitting lists, while Responsible authorities, politicians, chiefs and community members also submit lists and demand quotas and lecturers threaten to strike if their relatives are not considered.

This study further discovered that colleges invite too many candidates – more than 8 000 competing for approximately 500 to 600 vacancies – using a 20-25 minutes interview as the

selection tool. In the absence of Ministry policy, colleges adopt diverse tools and rules for student selection. This study argues for an additive model which combines selection tools, guided by clearly laid down Ministry policy for student selection to provide standardisation across colleges and make the process more robust. The thesis suggests a need for further research into enhancing student teacher selection into teacher training colleges.

In relation to CHAT, my argument is that the framework provides a useful generic, analytical tool for thinking through the interactions and relationships between human, non-human and social elements on how student teacher selection happens in the activity system – the teacher training college. However, on its own, CHAT does not provide a complete lens to make sense of what happens in the stage-by-stage movement of the prospective student on the selection journey. The thesis, therefore, argues for an additive model to CHAT, which includes a complementary lens – Funnel theory – to expand the framework and deepen its applicability, specifically in trying to understand student teacher selection processes. The thesis suggests the need for more studies, drawing on the framework and developing it to determine its applicability beyond this particular inquiry.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Vengai Tazviwana Berejena, my late beloved mother, Auxillia Berejena, uncles Boniface Tsauka Berejena, Erekia Oliver, Eria Calisto, my late beloved sekuru Cladius Makusha and my brothers and sister, Alexander, Christopher Nhamo and Ruzarira. Thank you for your protection and inspiration.

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I also want to thank the student teachers, lecturers and vice principals who participated in my study. This study would not have been possible without your cooperation. My thanks also go to the principals of the four selected teacher training colleges who gave me freedom of their institutions to conduct my research.

LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A Level	Advanced level
AIDA	Awareness/Attention, Interest, Desire and Action
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FGD	Focus group discussion
GPA	Grade Point Average
HOD	Head of Department
I.D.	Identity Card
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MHTESTD	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science, Technology Development.
O level	Ordinary level
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development
PTH	Primary Teachers Higher
PTL	Primary Teachers Lower
SCM	Selection Committee Member
SMS	Short messages sending service
SSCE	Secondary School Certificate in Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom

UKZN	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Education Fund
USA	United States of America
VAIL	Video Assessment Interactions and Learning
VP	Vice Principal
Wits	University of Witwatersrand
Zim-ASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education programmes since 2012 in Zimbabwe. Teacher training selections are critical for bringing the most suitable applicants for the teaching profession into teacher education programmes (Mankki and Raiha 2020). In other words, student teacher selections serve to identify those candidates likely to be competent teachers, thereby enhancing education quality. The focus on quality education within the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has made many states and multilateral organisations turn their attention to the development of quality teachers, as teachers are regarded as the key drivers for improving students' learning achievements, as well as for fostering the values of peace and social cohesion (Sayed and McDonald 2017). This is mainly because research shows that, after home background, teachers are the most critical in-school factor in education quality (UNESCO 2019; The Education Commission 2019). Ensuring that children have access not only to educational opportunities but also to high-quality education leading to high learning achievements is seen as a central driver in the realisation of an individual's potential and of the transformation of a country's human development prospects (UNDP 2014). The pursuit of quality education (SDG Goal-4) remains topical in the global education policy landscape (UNESCO 2019; World Bank 2019). It has been noted that provision of quality education in developing countries has not progressed satisfactorily (Bold et al. 2017; The Education Commission 2019). All this has been blamed on teacher quality *inter alia*.

One way to improve teacher quality and, consequently, education quality is to ensure an appropriate student teacher selection process (Klassen et al. 2019). There is a correlation between student teacher selection into teacher education and the quality of teacher produced. Research shows that appropriate student teacher selection processes yield competent teachers and enable improvement in achievement of educational outcomes as teacher effectiveness is related to student achievement (Darling-Hammond and Young 2002). Jacob (2016) also states that improving student teacher selection has the potential to improve the quality of the teacher workforce at a relatively low cost, as well as to decrease learner exposure to ineffective

instruction. In other words, selection enables choosing candidates who are likely to be effective teachers while at the same time enabling the discarding of incompetent teachers. Literature also indicates that the selection of good teacher candidates is important for a nation's social and economic well-being (Goldhaber, Walch and Gabele 2014). Economically speaking, the training of an effective teacher has generally been described as a 2-million-dollar investment (Klassen et al. 2018). Conversely, selecting ineffective teachers may represent a costly mistake. Deleon (2019) and Lin Li (2015) concur that the consequences of selecting poor teacher training candidates has negative effects not only related to reduced learner achievements but also to a general fall in standards of teacher education, as learning quality decreases as a result of poor in-college performance which may also lead to college and programme reputation destruction.

Notwithstanding however that student teacher selection represents a crucial part of teacher education, there appears to be no consensus on how students should be selected into teacher education at the global, regional, local or even the national level. Kamal (2005) laments the lack of consensus on whom to select and how to select students into teacher training programmes. Lynaigh et al. (2018) point out that student selection into training schools is both contentious and fiercely debated. Lynaigh et al. (2018) further indicate that the lack of agreement emanates from the fact that stakeholders, i.e., candidates, institutions, governments and communities, have vested and differing interests in student teacher selection processes.

The particular sample group explored in this study had gone through student teacher selection processes to enter teacher education. Examining them enabled an exploration of student teacher selection issues that intersect with the bigger debates on how to select. These included whether it is a good idea to rely on one or two selection tools, such as examination of school grades, selection interviews, recommendation letters or entrance tests. This interaction, therefore, lifts the specifics of the 40 student teachers, eight lecturers and four Vice Principals (the fourth Vice Principal is the researcher) that formed the heart of this study into wider debates on student teacher selection. Thus, in this study, it is not only about understanding the 51 participants. While these student teachers, lecturers and Vice Principals are not fully representative due to the small sample size, they exemplify student teachers in teacher education in Zimbabwe, a developing country, and may shed light on issues that are pertinent to the wider context.

One key dimension of good quality education as alluded to above is teacher quality, as the quality of the teacher impacts on teaching/learning and, consequently, on learner success

(Akareem and Hossain 2016; Klassen et al. 2019). Effective student teacher selection, good quality teacher training and appropriate qualification are generally believed to imply the quality of the teacher. As good education is generally believed to produce good learning outcomes teacher education is, expected to contribute to this objective. Given that the phenomenon of good quality education has become an international concern (UNESCO 2019) it became imperative to focus local efforts on teacher education, specifically student teacher selection processes. This study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in four selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. It focuses on how pre-service teachers are selected into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

This chapter is organized into seven sections. Following this introduction, I discuss the focus and purpose of the study. I then provide a background to this study. This is followed by my context and personal motivation for the study and the rationale for undertaking the study. Subsequently, I highlight the key question and the subsidiary research questions. I then provide overviews of the theoretical framework and methodological approach. The chapter is tied up with a conclusion and overview of the thesis before I define some of the key terms and concepts used in this study.

In this study, teacher training college and teachers' college are used interchangeably. In addition, student and student teacher are also used interchangeably to refer to teacher trainees or pre-service teachers.

1.2 Focus and purpose of the study

From about 2008, up to the time of this study, the Zimbabwe economic environment took a downturn which gave rise to retrenchments, as many companies either folded or relocated to neighbouring countries. Consequently, the retrenched or unemployed Advanced and Ordinary Level graduates saw teaching as the only avenue of hope for employment following teacher training (Macharaga 2021). As a result, the numbers of applicants swelled and competition for vacancies became stiff. Marufu (2014b) reported that Zimbabwean Teachers' Colleges invited and interviewed at least 8 000 applicants for 500 vacancies. As the numbers of applicants kept rising beyond what the colleges could absorb, with several applicants being turned away, questions regarding how the few 'lucky' ones were selected – the selection tools, the rules and guiding principles followed, the behaviour of different stakeholders, issues of transparency and fairness in the selection process – needed to be answered.

Thus, given the large numbers and stiff competition, many applicants submitted applications and attended many selection interviews – sometimes up to six selection interviews – without gaining entry into teacher education. It is such students, who applied and were interviewed by teacher training colleges at least two times without success, who were explored in this study. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to investigate the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe. The study attempted to develop an understanding of what student teachers go through to enter teacher training. Through the eyes and stories of student teachers, lecturers and Vice Principals this study attempted to understand the student teacher selection processes in four selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Background

This section begins by offering a global and regional perspective on student college admission.

1.3.1 Context of student college admission – A global and regional perspective

From the global context, Umhofer (2015), indicates that in 1642 the first set of admission requirements to enter Harvard College in the United States of America (USA) were Greek and Latin. These languages formed the selection tool at Harvard College at that time. However, more subjects were later introduced to the list of requirements which included arithmetic, grammar, sciences and other languages (Umhofer 2015). Admission was based on passes and good grades in these specific subjects. The subject requirements, thus, formed part of the student selection rules and tools in the USA. This in some way related to the O level subject requirements that were used as rules and tools in Zimbabwe at the time of this study. Then, around 1800, in the USA due to the growing population, diverse admissions tools and rules were developed. Around 1900, selection rules and tools included Standardized Admission Tests (SATs). Umhofer (2015) shows that the first standardized admission tests were the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs). In short, Greek and Latin, including other subjects and the Scholastic Aptitude and Standardized Admission Tests formed part of the student selection rules and tools in early times of college admission in the USA.

In recent years, globally, the demand for teacher training has increased and there has been stiff competition for vacancies and a huge increase in applications to enter teacher training colleges. High rejection rates have been noted (Worth and McLean 2020; Okolo 2020; Lukas and

Samardzic 2015; Falkenberg 2010) Similar observations about demand for training vacancies and stiff competition had been made previously (see for example Camara and Kimmel 2005; Case and Childs 2007; Sahlberg 2010). For instance, in the USA in 2012, one college rejected 34 302 applicants and accepted 2 032 students. In another college 33 415 were rejected while 2 427 were accepted (Cashin 2014). In Finland, one in every ten applicants was accepted or nine out of ten rejected (Sahlberg 2010). In Singapore, one third of the most successful students were accepted or two thirds of the most successful students were rejected (Lukas and Samardzic 2015).

On the regional level, Chijioke (2020) indicates that student selection into higher education institutions in Nigeria is becoming more complex by the year. Figures continue to increase. For example, in the 2012/2013 selection process, 1 503 889 candidates applied but only 500 000 of these candidates were admitted into various Nigerian Tertiary Institutions (Chijioke 2020). That meant that 1 003 889 were rejected. During the same 2012/2013 period in other Higher Education Technical Institutions 3 700 from 80 000 candidates were admitted and 76 000 were rejected (Chijioke 2020). What this shows is that competition for admission into Higher Education institutions is stiff in both global and regional contexts.

Akkari and Lauwerier (2015) described the state of selection rules and tools for pre-service teachers in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa as inadequate and ill-defined. In addition, Lewin (2014) indicates that the current student teacher selection policies in many African Countries is fragmented, incomplete and simply underdeveloped. This state of affairs with regards to student teacher selection needs attention. One South African medical school shows that selection policies and rules for undergraduate medical programmes use academic and non-academic rules and tools in selecting students (van der Merwe 2016). In addition, in Malawi an admissions policy for student selection into Malawi Secondary schools (Sandikonda 2013) is in place but there seems to be no selection policy for entry into teacher education. The tools used and rules (policies) followed in student teacher selection in Zimbabwe, a Southern African country, needed to be understood. Having offered some background regarding student selection at the global and regional level, in the next section I discuss the history of teacher education in Zimbabwe where I highlight student teacher selection processes, tools and rules used.

1.3.2 Zimbabwe historical and policy context on teacher education – Pre-independence

Teacher education in Zimbabwe from the 1890s when the pioneer column arrived in Zimbabwe up to 1964 was under British colonial rule. In 1965, the colonial settler government in Zimbabwe declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain. Education remained divided on racial lines – black and white (Mukeredzi 2009). Teacher education was not spared either. Niven (1976) cited by Mukeredzi indicates that teachers for white schools were either graduates from foreign universities and colleges or imported from overseas. However, black teacher education was in the hands of the missionaries and teacher training colleges were mainly located in the rural areas (Mukeredzi 2009; Siyakwazi 1979). Teacher education was the responsibility of missionaries who recruited and selected student teachers on the basis of their religious denominations (Machingura 2006). In other words, they used religious affiliation as part of the selection rules and tools. According to Tarusikirwa (2016) teacher training was under the African education division and was entrusted to missionaries who were under strict instruction from the settler administration not to ‘overeducate’ the Africans.

The missionary colleges at the time trained Primary Teacher Lower (PTL) which was four years’ duration to teach Sub-Standard A and Sub-Standard B (Manyadze 2021). These were reception grades attended by children of five and six years before enrolment into Standard One (equivalent Grade One) (Mukeredzi 2009; Mukeredzi 2013). Selection for entry into the PTL programme was based on possession of a Standard Two (Grade Four) qualification and being aged between 12 and 50 years old (Tarusikirwa 2016). The age requirement changed to 16-25 years in 1929. Around 1927 the number of schools had increased from 33 to 1351 and this created teacher shortages (Tarusikirwa 2016). Subsequently, in 1929 a higher teacher training course – Primary Teacher Higher (PTH) was launched to train teachers who would teach Grades Three to Seven. This was a two-year course, where the selection rules and tools included successful completion of Standard Three (Grade Five) as pronounced by Government notice number 676, November 1929 (Tarusikirwa 2016) and the age remained at 16-25 years. By 1939, the selection rules and tools in the same programme had been raised to Standard Four (Grade Six) but the age range remained at 16-25 years (Tarusikirwa 2016). Running concurrently with the PTH in 1939, a new teacher training model, a two-year in-service programme for PTL teachers was introduced. Candidates for this programme had to have

Junior Certificate or Form Two. These teachers would teach children in the Infant, Early Childhood or Foundation Phase.

The Annual Report of the (Rhodesia) Secretary for African Education (1968) shows that in 1949 selection into the two-year teacher training PTH for Grades Three to Seven teachers now required 10 years of schooling or a Southern Rhodesia Junior Certificate or a Cambridge School Certificate (12 years of schooling). At the same time, T4 Teacher Training which was a two-year programme replaced the PTL model for Early Childhood teachers and another model, T3 a two-year programme, replaced the PTH (ibid). Years later, around 1976, the T3 two-year teacher training programme was replaced by three-year teacher training but still remained known as the T3. Selection rules and tools for this three-year course included a Cambridge O Level School Certificate (Equivalent Grade 11). The changes from one programme to the other were meant to enhance teacher quality (Rhodesia Government Education Policy 1966). However, this justification provided by the UDI government contradicted the earlier instruction by the British Government to missionaries not to over-educate Africans.

Until after the 1920s, African teacher education was in the hands of the missionaries as alluded to above. It was only around 1956 that the Government became involved in teacher education and established Hillside Teachers' College (then known as 'The Teacher's College') to train white teachers to teach in white children's secondary schools. A few years later in 1963 Gwelo (now Gweru) Teachers' College was opened for black student teachers who would teach in secondary schools for black children (Colclough et al. 1990). The selection rules and tools for student teacher entry into these secondary teachers' colleges, like in the primary colleges discussed above, included at least five O levels passes, including English Language (Colclough et al. 1990). Thus, while teachers from these government institutions taught in the secondary school sector, primary school teachers trained in the missionary colleges like Morgenster Teachers' College which had been established in 1902 (Chivaura 2014) taught in the primary schools.

Student teacher selection was done by the college principals and their deputies (Chivore 1990). This was a common practice across all teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe at the time. However, from 1978 student selection into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe became centralized (Chivore 1990). This meant that candidates applied to the Ministry of Education and selection was the responsibility of the Teacher Education Selection Committee, consisting

of all college principals and chaired by the Deputy Secretary, Education Development Division (Chivore 1990). The centralized, national student selection and management system allocated prospective trainees to different colleges based on academic merit and application details and also the level of teacher training a candidate sought (primary or secondary). In comparison to the selection by college principals and their deputies, centralization was apparently impartial and transparent. The number of candidates seeking to train as teachers at the time was low as the economy was flourishing and not many young men and women wanted to train as teachers (Marufu 2014b). Again, at the time, all training colleges followed a conventional teacher training model where students were in college for three years, with one term (four months) on Teaching Practice (TP) (Chivore 1990). It was only in the late 1980s that student teacher selection was decentralised to individual teacher training colleges from the centralised Ministry Teacher Education Selection Committee system. Selection then became a college process.

1.3.3 Zimbabwe historical and policy context on teacher education – Post-Independence

After Independence in 1980, massification of education at all levels of the education system created severe teacher demand that outstripped the supply from conventional teacher colleges (Mukeredzi 2009). This gave rise to the opening of new teacher training colleges and the introduction of various teacher education models that ran either concurrently or subsequently: the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC); the 2-Year in, 2-Year out Model; the Attachment Model (1-1-1); the 2-5-2 Model; and the Zimbabwe/Cuba teacher training programme. These are discussed in turn below.

In January 1981 the Zimbabwe National Integrated Teacher Course (ZINTEC) was introduced in four newly established Teachers' Colleges. The ZINTEC Model of teacher training was intended to enable education access and then later to meet the EFA commitments for free and compulsory primary education (Mukeredzi 2009; Mukeredzi 2013). When the ZINTEC programme started, it was a four-year course in which student teachers spent the first sixteen weeks (One term or 4 Months) of the first term of their first year in college; ten terms (40 Months or 3 years and 4 months) on TP internship and the final sixteen weeks (4 Months) of their fourth and final year in college (Mukeredzi 2009 ; Mukeredzi 2013). After some years the ZINTEC was reduced to a three-year course in which students spent the first two terms (8 Months) of their first year in college, five terms (1 year 2 terms) on TP internship and the final two terms (8 Months) of their third year in college (Maguraushe 2015). This model is often referred to as the 2-5-2. In the ZINTEC model, students assumed full responsibility for classes

and were attached to a mentor as overseer. Students returned to college in their fourth year for the final 16 weeks to consolidate the practical learning with theory and write final examinations (Chivore 1986; 1990). The ZINTEC model ran parallel to the then existing conventional programmes which were in other colleges and lasted until the early 1990s. With regard to student selection rules and tools, initially, ZINTEC required candidates with 5 O level subjects including a language and then later stipulated the English language after realising that trainees had some challenges with English. Later, the Mathematics requirement was included. Thus, the selection rules and tools included 5 O level subjects including English and Mathematics.

In the 2-Year in, 2-Year out Model, that was introduced in 1982 student teachers were to be in college during the 1st and 3rd year and on school experience during the 2nd and 4th year (Mukeredzi 2009). As in the ZINTEC, the selection rules and tools were 5 O level subjects including English Language and Mathematics. This model extended the duration of training from three to four years and was in operation until the mid-1990s. Deployment targeted needy rural schools and during school experience trainees assumed full responsibility for classes but were attached to a mentor as an overseer. The student teacher was responsible for the entire teaching load, like in the ZINTEC, to address teacher demand and supply (Tarusikirwa 2016). The model was abandoned in the middle of the 1990s. Manyadze (2021) notes that both students and lecturers felt that the fourth TP year was a wasted year as students could operate as qualified teachers. This resulted in the move back to a three-year teacher training model.

From the mid-1990s, the teacher education system reverted back to the 3-year Teacher Education Model and adopted the 1-1-1 Attachment Model (Mukeredzi 2009 ; Mukeredzi 2013). In the Attachment Model student teachers were on campus during the 1st and 3rd year and on school placement in the 2nd year. Student teachers were attached to a mentor (Attachment Model) and worked without teaching loads of their own. The selection rules and tools included oral interviews and 5 O level subjects including English Language and Mathematics. According to Mukeredzi (2009) and Chiromo (2004) student teachers were treated as ‘supernumeraries’. The Attachment Model to some extent brought closer cooperation between participating schools and teacher education institutions and it was the mentor who was expected to provide for and nurture professional growth (Mukeredzi 2013). This model was also popularly known as the "Sandwich" Model of teacher education (Manyadze 2021; Mukeredzi 2013; Tarusikirwa 2016) because the TP year was sandwiched between the two years of residential college courses.

In 2003, the 2-5-2 School-Based Model was introduced. The selection rules and tools were 5 O level subjects including English and Mathematics and oral interviews. Students were in college during the first (2) two and last (2) two terms and on TP (school experience) for five terms. In the Zimbabwe education system, a school term is four calendar months. Like in the Attachment Model above, students did not have a full load but were attached to mentors and received tuition from their colleges through Open and Distance Learning (Murerwa 2004).

In addition to the models discussed above, Mukeredzi (2009) indicates that in 1980, the Zimbabwe/Cuba teacher training programme was launched. Some 100-200 students were sent to Cuba annually to study for teaching degrees in science education. After ten years, this programme was moved to Zimbabwe and a new local university of Science and Technology was established. Selection rules and tools specified 'A' Level subjects, including **5 'O' Level subjects with English Language and Mathematics.**

From the discussion of the models of teacher education above Samkange (2015) points out that the models have evolved over decades in Zimbabwe. All models, except the ZINTEC, were launched in both primary and secondary teacher training colleges. At the time of this study, the 2-5-2 Teacher Education Model was operational in all teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. It was the students studying in this 2-5-2 Model, who had attended at least two selection interviews without getting a vacancy who were targeted in this study.

1.3.4 Zimbabwe context of teacher education and the economy

Within the last decade, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has experienced a renaissance with broad-based economic growth including structural economic deepening, diversification and increasing political stability in many countries (Kanyenze, Chitambara and Tyson 2017). Zimbabwe, however, has been an exception. Between 1999 and 2008, Zimbabwe's GDP declined by 52% which ended in a period of hyperinflation and dollarisation of the economy. Subsequently, the economy experienced anaemic growth which averaged 2.9% from 2009 to 2016 (Kanyenze et al. 2017). Kanyenze et al. (2017) Moyo and Crafford (2010) and Ndakaripa (2021) concur that in the last decade, Zimbabwe has grappled with severe hyperinflation which has led to the lack of a stable national currency, accompanied by shortages of investors and labour. Regardless of other debatable causes of the crises, the Zimbabwean government has generally labelled hyperinflation the country's foremost enemy and the root cause of the crises. The cause of the hyperinflation has been the arbitrary printing of money by the Zimbabwean

government and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (Moyo and Crafford 2010; Ndakaripa 2021). The lack of a stable national currency led to business closures and stunted economic growth.

The company closures created huge retrenchments and general unemployment in all sectors of the economy except in the education sector (Marufu 2014a). This scenario located education as the only window of hope for employment following graduation. Ndlovu (2014) confirms that teaching remains the only major window of hope for accessing employment for most O-Level and A-Level school leavers, as well as retrenchees and other unemployed. Consequently, this has created extraordinary demands for places to train as teachers, as retrenchees, the unemployed and graduates from O and A Level all compete for training vacancies. Notwithstanding the massive growth in numbers of college applicants, there were apparently no commensurate infrastructural and other developments in the colleges. The Zimbabwean teacher training colleges could only accommodate a few hundred prospective student teachers due to limited infrastructural, human, material and financial resources. Hence, many applicants were rejected. From 2012 all teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe have recorded multitudes of applicants who attend interviews, many without success (Marufu 2014b and Ndlovu 2014) as reflected in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Applicants at College A from 2012 to 2016

NUMBER	YEAR	NUMBER APPLIED	NUMBER OFFERED PLACES
1	2012	1500	385
2	2013	2500	385
3	2014	4000	670
4	2015	6000	693
5	2016	7000	700

Source: College A Student Affairs Department (2017)

Notwithstanding that there are seventeen teacher training colleges in the country, many school leavers competed for entry into these colleges to train as teachers as alluded to above. Mutambwa et al. (2014) refer to student teacher selection into teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe as a complex and controversial process. This situation has continued to place teacher training

colleges in arduous situations during student selection to select a few student teachers from thousands of applicants. Marufu (2014b) confirms that teacher education programmes are receiving more applications than they can handle for teacher training. This explains the large rejection rates experienced in colleges as reflected above.

1.3.5 Zimbabwe teacher education policy context

Zimbabwean Teacher Education apparently does not have a policy on student teacher selection. Colleges draw from the Ministry operational guidelines or advertisements for vacancies, which lack detail on the actual procedures for selection (Machingura 2006; Marufu 2014a). The guidelines state that one must apply to the principal of the college of one's choice (Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development for Government Teachers' Colleges and Technical or Vocational Institutions Regulations, 81 of 1991). Advertisements for teacher training vacancies are placed in all national newspapers by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (MHTE) advising interested individuals to apply to the college of their choice. Accompanying the advert is information regarding eligibility to train as teachers as reflected in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Advertisement for teacher training vacancies

Bulawayo-Midlands UMYF District - J4utly5 t11Smpo,s0 2031h6 ·
 Various Intakes
 (D)TEACHER TRAINING INTAKE
 MASVINGO TEACHERS COLLEGE
 PRIMARY TEACHING TRAINING JANUARY 2017
 Vacancies have arisen for teacher training at Masvingo teachers college commencing January 2017
 REQUIREMENTS
 -A minimum of 5 O levels with Grade "C" or better including Mathematics, Science and English
 -Application form to be accompanied with Commissioner of Oaths certified photocopies of your
 *I.D
 *Birth Certificate
 *"O" level certificates and any other relevant certificates
 HOW TO APPLY
 *Complete an application form obtainable from College or from the college website
www.masvingoteachers.ac.zw
 *Submit completed application form with Commissioner of Oaths certified photocopies of the above documents
 NB
 i) Only those meeting the stated entry requirements need to apply
 ii) Only shortlisted applicants will be invited for interviews on a date to be advised
 CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 18th July 2016
 All official communication to be addressed to
 The Principal
 Masvingo Teachers College
 PO Box 760 Masvingo

Source: Mafondokoto The Chronicle: page 18, July 11, (2016).

Apart from the details provided in the advertisement, there was no other information to guide colleges on student teacher selection. While the information in the advertisement offers some pointers in terms of eligibility there are no clear details of the rules and tools to use, including procedures for student teacher selection that colleges should follow. In the absence of clear policy and procedures, individual colleges were left to develop their own tools, rules and procedures. Machingura (2006) and Marufu (2014a) confirm the absence of Higher Education policy and procedures, pointing out that selection of student teachers for teacher training in Zimbabwe is handled by colleges without clear guidelines or direction from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Furthermore, Machingura indicates that this makes the colleges autonomous and so they can come up with their own policies and arrange their own selection tools, rules and procedures. This lack of policy removes standardisation in student teacher selection across teacher training colleges in the country. The role of the ministry then is only to provide staff, erect structures and allocate resources (Machingura 2006).

Maggilla, Rutayuga and Kondo (2007) from Tanzania argue that policy and guidelines on student teacher selection are critical for controlling and managing the recruitment, selection and admission of student teachers, as well as for maintaining and ensuring some kind of uniformity and standardisation across teacher colleges. This is not the case in Zimbabwe notwithstanding that all colleges are under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, and their quality assurance and control is ensured by the University of Zimbabwe, Department of Teacher Education. In a situation where there are no clear policy guidelines, with more than 7 000 aspirants applying to one college, from where only between 500 and 700 are selected and admitted, one wonders what tools, rules, processes and strategies colleges employ to enable appropriate student teacher selection, as well as to provide guidance on how to handle stakeholder responses to the demand for vacancies.

There is no doubt that student teacher selection issues constitute a contemporary debate in teacher education in Zimbabwe. It is against this background that it becomes imperative to explore the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in order to understand the tools, rules and processes of student teacher selection and how the different stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies.

1.4 Personal context and motivation for the study

This section highlights my personal context and motivation for this study illustrating how I became interested in student teacher selection processes.

My teaching career commenced after completing a Primary School Teaching Diploma at the United College of Education in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe in 1983. It was three years after Zimbabwe Independence, when the country was facing a severe shortage of teachers, particularly secondary school teachers, to take up posts in the newly established rural secondary schools (Mukeredzi 2016). Consequently, I was deployed to a secondary school in Gutu District to teach Mathematics as I had taken Mathematics as a major subject at college. During this period, I enrolled for a Bachelor of Education Degree (BED) in Geography which I successfully completed in 1989. Following undergraduate studies, I embarked on a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies and Arts. After 12 years teaching Mathematics and Geography and having obtained a Master's Degree, I was promoted to High School Head (Principal) in 1996. Part of my responsibility as High School Head was to select and admit Form One (Grade 8) and Form Five (Grade 12) learners into the school. Recruitment and selection time, as well as the processes involved, always excited me. However, this type of selection was straightforward as it was broadly stipulated by the Ministry of Education and followed the point and merit system as selection rules and tools. This marked the beginning of my interest in student selection.

After seven years as School Head, in 2003 I joined teacher education as a senior lecturer at Gwanda Teachers' College and was immediately appointed as a member of the college's student teacher selection committee because of my experience in learner selection in high school. This increased my passion for student selection. It was also at this stage that I recalled and reflected on the selection processes that I had gone through to get into college for teacher training.

In my day student teacher selection was centralised and carried out at the Head Office of the Ministry of Education and did not involve applicants approaching the colleges. Successful applicants would receive offer letters to go and train as teachers without attending any selection interviews. This approach was apparently simple and objective, as opposed to the system that

was operational at the time of this study where applicants went through face to face student selection interviews and written tests at colleges. The centralized student selection system was possible due to the small number of applicants at the time.

In September 2013 I was appointed Vice Principal at a Missionary Teacher Training College. One of my key responsibilities was standards control across all college activities, including student teacher selection. It was during selection strategic meetings with staff that my passion for student selection became more apparent. In addition, my encounter with stakeholders from various backgrounds who visited the Vice Principal's office seeking teacher training vacancies – including officials from higher offices: ministers, chiefs, governors, high ranking members of the uniformed forces, some whom left lists of their relatives that they wanted considered – raised several questions in my mind about student teacher selection. It was at this stage that I decided to get an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of student teacher selection into teachers' colleges and how student teachers themselves experienced these selection processes.

1.5 Rationale for the study

Rationale for this study is driven by four issues: lack of consensus on whom to select and how to select; focus on quality of training and quality of education; public interest in higher education; and limited literature on student teacher selection.

First, whom to select and how to select for pre-service teacher education programmes have become perennial challenges the world over (Caskey, Peterson and Temple 2001; Falkenberg 2010; Klassen et al. 2017). Zimbabwe is not an exception. In Zimbabwe this challenge was exacerbated by too many applicants competing for too few available vacancies for teacher training. This is highlighted by Camara and Kimmel (2005) and Mckown (2013) who concur that appropriate selection is vital whenever there are too many applicants and too few available places. In addition, there are no agreed tools, criteria or rules for selecting student teachers for pre-service teacher training (Lynaigh et al. 2018). It is this lack of agreement on ways of selecting student teachers in Zimbabwe that necessitated research in the area.

In addition, the intense debates about student teacher selection on a global level have not yet yielded agreement. For example, in the United States debates on student selection centre on the rules and tools used to select and admit student teachers into colleges. In this regard, Camara and Kimmel (2005) argue that rules and tools that include the Standardized Admission Tests

(SATs) are too old. Still about using SATs as part of college selection rules and tools, Biamonte (2013) argues that SATs oppress low-income racial-minority and female groups, at least in the United States of America due to the costs involved in taking SAT tests. Meanwhile, in Canada Childs and Casey (2007) argue that there are attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) which act as rules to be considered when selecting student teachers for training. With regards to these rules, no position has been taken on which attributes to consider when selecting students for teacher training (Falkenberg 2010). Thus, there is no agreed position on the rules and tools to be used for selecting student teachers for teacher training. All these unanswered questions created gaps to which my study would contribute. Some countries, like Kenya, have a Higher Education Board which grapples with issues of student teacher selection (Gemechu, Sonnemann and Young 2017) unlike in Zimbabwe where all student selection issues are relegated to individual institutions.

Secondly, the Zimbabwe government has shifted emphasis from increased access to increased quality of training and quality of education, in line with the needs of a volatile environment brought about by globalisation and economic difficulties (Mukeredzi 2016). The quality of education as alluded to above is determined by the quality of teachers (Lin Li 2015 and Lukas and Samardzic 2015). These authors argue that good quality teachers imply good quality education. It is, therefore, important to enrol suitable candidates who have appropriate attitudes, dispositions and motivations for teaching. The selection of good quality candidates is likely to ensure the production of good quality teachers. In support of good quality student teachers, Yusoff and Rahim (2011) from the medical field, point out that student selection into training plays a crucial role, because the quality of students selected into the medical schools determines the quality of doctors who graduate and go into the field. The same applies to teacher training, hence, the need for understanding student teacher selection. The opposite is also true: selection of poor candidates leads to misuse of public and institutional resources (Blunt 2009). Klassen et al. (2019) refer to selection of poor students as making bad decisions, arguing that it is costly for all stakeholders: school systems and society. Blunt (2009) adds that failure to select outstanding candidates weakens the field as a whole. So it is important that selection be conducted to ensure that the reputation and standard of teaching is maintained.

Thirdly, Schwartz (2004) argues that access to higher education, which is about student selection, is an issue of concern to many people. Research shows that higher education is regarded highly for many reasons: the prospects of wider opportunities and higher standards of living for individuals and society; benefits from higher tax revenues; lower demands on social

support programmes; lower rates of crime and greater levels of civic participation of college educated adults (Baum and Payea 2004; Tatum 2017). In other words, higher education is an investment which contributes to national economic development.

Besides the economic value of higher education, the intense scrutiny of student selection into higher education by stakeholders is clear evidence that higher education matters to many. Camara and Kimmel (2005) point out that students, parents, legislators, litigators and judges have challenged the selection decisions and processes made by some colleges. These challenges about student selection indicate that broader society is concerned about student selection processes. Zwick (1999), Camara and Kimmel (2005) and Grant (2011) concur that the importance of student teacher selection into teachers' colleges makes the process a source of controversy. It is, also, this controversy that has attracted a lot of attention from the public in Zimbabwe. As such the selection processes needed to be investigated and understood in-depth.

Fourthly, very limited literature is available for policy makers and academics regarding what students in teacher colleges go through to get selected. Their experiences in student selection needed to be documented. Through interaction with colleagues at college level and student teachers themselves, as well as with administrators in higher education regarding student teacher selection, students can contribute to policy formulation, critique and practice (Mukeredzi 2009) as they relate to selection into teacher education. Given that the study was located within larger international concerns and problems, it could inform policy makers and institutions, as well as teacher development experts on issues of selection of student teachers into teacher training colleges.

Professionals, academics and the research community need to understand not only what experiences student teachers go through but also how they interpret their experiences and understanding of student selection. Selection of student teachers is ultimately intended to enhance classroom instruction and, consequently, learner learning success. Society wants good teachers because it wants and needs a well-educated population, as well as effective learner learning and achievements (Mukeredzi 2016). Ultimately, therefore, according to Mukeredzi, the test of appropriate student selection must always be the quality of education learners in classrooms receive. For this reason, by exploring the dynamics of student teacher selection into teacher colleges, this case study could make a unique contribution to knowledge on student selection processes.

1.6 Research focus and questions

In pursuit of the issues raised above, this study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education. To enable the achievement of this objective, the study attempted to answer the key question: *What are the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe?* To unpack this question three sub-questions needed to be addressed:

1. What mediational tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges?
2. What rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?
3. How do stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies for teacher training?

1.7 Overview of theoretical framework

This study is guided by two theoretical frameworks: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) third generation (Engestrom 1993; 1999; 2004) and the Funnel Theory developed in 1898 by Lewis (Frost 2015; Goldberg 2017). CHAT consists of seven nodes or elements: subject, object, outcome, tools, rules, community and division of labour, which constitute an activity system (Engestrom 1993; 1999; 2004; Wilson 2014). The subjects are people engaged in an activity. In this study, subjects are selection committee members and the Vice Principal who are involved in the student selection process. The object is the target or aim. In this case student selection is the object. The outcome is the desired result or product which in this study is the selected students. Tools are the material, physical or psychological resources manipulated in engaging with the student selection process. In this study, material tools included interviews, written tests and computers while psychological tools included knowledge and mental models. Rules are policies, regulations or guidelines that are used to control how individuals select student teachers, for example, attributes and O-Level academic performance. The community refers to a group of people who share the same interest in the object. In this study the public, students, lecturers, community leaders, government officials, politicians and the religious have an interest in student selection. The division of labour represents allocation of duties and roles vertically and horizontally depending on skills possessed. The Principal, secretaries, drivers, accountants and security personnel play different roles. However, as the subjects and the community performed their expected duties or roles assigned to them by the division of labour,

diversions from the expected norms and practices were noted. These diversions are known as contradictions (Mukeredzi 2009). For instance, the subjects may fail to follow community rules on academic performance by selecting candidates with lower academic records. The community, too, may divert from the norms by using political power to influence student selection of unqualified or undeserving candidates. This creates contradictions.

Effectiveness of the system is dependent on the effective functioning of each node (Wilson 2014). Subjects use tools and they are regulated by rules in performing their duty of student selection and transforming it into the outcome, i.e., students selected. The entire functioning of the elements is influenced by the cultural and social context. Roth, Radford and La Croix (2012) indicate that the activity cannot be understood independent of its cultural and historical context. CHAT basically focuses on how individuals benefit through engagement in collaborative activity (Mukeredzi 2009). Given the many role players and stakeholders involved in student selection and the seven nodes, CHAT was vital for understanding and analysing the role of each node and the enacting of the division of labour by each community member in the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education. Notwithstanding, CHAT did not help in unpacking what happens at each stage of the student's journey of selection into teacher education. Funnel Theory as a complementary theory fulfils that role. The Funnel Theory developed in 1898 by Lewis (Zinn and Johansson 2015) traces the route taken by prospective student teachers on their journeys of entry into teacher education from recruitment through application to enrolment. With its origins in marketing, where it was used for tracing the journey of a product (Kotler and Keller 2012; Gupta 2016; Sharkey 2017), Funnel theory was ideal for tracing the student's journey into teacher education. The enrolment Funnel Theory, also known as recruitment funnel or admission Funnel theory (Monitor, ICEF 2015), consists of at least five stages (Monzon 2021): stage one – Prospective; stage two – Inquiries; stage three – Applicant; stage four – Admitted; and stage five – Enrolled Student (Zinn and Johansson 2015). These stages, thus, mark the journey of the prospective student up to enrolment or registration. Stage one (Monzon 2021) are aspiring students who show interest in going to college but may not be aware of the target institution and programmes being offered. In other words, these are just potential candidates. Stage two involves prospective students who have shown interest in the institution, have requested information or personally communicated with the college (Ajiboye et al. 2020). The college may even call to advise or encourage the inquirer to apply for admission. Stage three comes after inquiries and represents individuals who have written and submitted applications to the college and are waiting for responses. Stage

four includes those students who have applied to college and have been successful and have received offer letters or confirmed admissions. Stage five is where the student is considered to be admitted and registered for classes (Monzon 2021). The enrolment funnel was employed in this study for its ability to enable understanding of what happens at each stage, i.e., where there is reduction of the entities at each point, narrowing to the tip of the funnel, to help understand the social processes in student teacher selection (Zinn and Johansson 2015). Funnel theory, thus, complemented CHAT by enabling understanding of the process while CHAT helped enable understanding of how the different nodes enacted their roles in the process of student selection.

1.8 Overview of the methodological approach

The aim of this study was to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in four selected colleges in Zimbabwe. The study was located within the interpretive paradigm, where multiple-site case design and a qualitative approach were employed. Locating the study within these orientations was vital for understanding subjective individual experiences (Ryan 2018) of student selection dynamics from the perspectives of the 40 student teachers, eight lecturers and three Vice Principals in this study. Data generation, which commenced with conveniently sampling the four primary school teacher training colleges (two government and two church run colleges), was followed by conveniently sampling student teachers, from where I would purposively choose study participants. Data were generated through focus group discussions, face to face interviews and live observations of selection interviews. These data were analysed manually through an eight-step open coding approach. Aspects of rigour were enhanced in this qualitative study through the four aspects of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability, as detailed in Chapter Four. Ethical issues that were taken into consideration throughout the study involved informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

Limitations of the study emerged mainly from the philosophical location of the study. The use of the interpretive paradigm, case study design, qualitative approach, as well as data generation methods, resulted in limited generalizability of findings. Transferability of findings was left to the reader or researcher to confirm, based on their understanding and experiences, given that the strength of these findings was fostered by the fact that the study involved four distinct research sites. Researcher bias was minimised by the multi-modal approach to data generation

which enabled methods triangulation, including the open-mindedness that the researcher adopted, ‘setting aside their own notions’. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

1.9 Summary and overview of the thesis

This chapter introduced the study, placing it in wider debates on student selection in an effort to understand the dynamics of pre-service teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe. The chapter begins by outlining the focus and purpose of the study. Following this, the chapter contextualises the study, first, by highlighting student selection issues from the global and regional contexts. It then traces the historical development of teacher education and teacher training models, including student selection in Zimbabwe pre- and post-Independence eras, including issues of policy to locate the study in the national context. The motivations and rationale, including the research question, are outlined. The chapter highlights some of the challenges faced by retrenched, the unemployed and high school graduates in trying to enter teacher education, which emanate from the worsening national economic crisis experienced in the country since 2008. The economic crisis, which heightened retrenchments and unemployment as industries and factories closed down, led to thousands of the unemployed and school leavers seeking opportunities to train as teachers, as teaching offered the only avenue of employment. Consequently, the number of those applying for teacher training swelled beyond the limited capacities of the teacher training colleges. This study, therefore, sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into these teacher training colleges, examining the tools and rules for student teacher selection considering the huge number of applicants, as well as how stakeholders responded to this severe demand for vacancies.

1.9.1 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter One introduces the study, as discussed in the conclusion above. It outlines the focus and purpose of the study, followed by the study background. I, then, outline my personal context and motivation for this study, including the rationale for undertaking this work. Research questions are then outlined, followed by overviews of the theoretical framework and the methodological approach. The organisation of the thesis and definition of key terms winds up the chapter.

Chapter Two discusses the reviewed literature on student selection. The literature is organised conceptually, based on research questions drawing on global, regional and local debates. Cognitive tools and interviews emerge as the most popular mediational artefacts in both the global and regional studies. With reference to the rules guiding student selection into teachers training colleges, motivation and academic excellence emerge as the most popular rules in the global context. At the regional level, institutional admission policies emerge as the most popular rules guiding selection in the various institutions, for instance, affirmative action policy, catchment area policy, racial based policy and academic based policy. Stakeholders in the global and regional studies reviewed respond to the demand for vacancies in diverse ways. For example, powerful stakeholders use personal connections to get their children or relatives selected into institutions. Other stakeholders pay large sums of money to get their children and relatives university admission. From the CHAT perspective, all these responses constitute secondary contradictions, as they work against rules and division of labour as allocated by the community.

Chapter Three discusses the two theoretical frameworks – Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engestrom 1993, 1999, 2004) and Funnel Theory (Gupta 2016; Sharkey 2017) – that guide the study. The chapter starts with a discussion of CHAT, which is the overarching theoretical framework for this study, tracing its historical development from Vygotsky (1978-1986) to Leonteiv (1920-1930), Engestrom (1993-2004) and others (Roth, Radford and La Croix 2012). The chapter then discusses the evolution of CHAT through its three generations (first, second and third generation), capturing the main essences of each generation up to the third generation employed in this study. The principles of the theory and their application in this study are also discussed. Some of the weaknesses of CHAT and how they were dealt with in this study are highlighted. With regard to the Funnel Theory, which is a complementary theory, its historical development and key concepts or principles are identified and briefly discussed, with examples from the study including a justification as to why it is necessary to draw it into this study.

Chapter Four discusses the research design and methodology as highlighted above, and covers research paradigms and philosophical assumptions: ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. This is followed by the case study research design, where multiple-site case study is adopted for this research is discussed, followed by the qualitative research approach. The study population and piloting instruments, including the sampling techniques both purposive and convenient that are employed to extract participants, and how the participants

are sampled are also discussed. The chapter discusses data generation and data analysis methods, including the reasons for choices made. The discussion covers trustworthiness, as well as ethical aspects considered in the study. Finally, the study limitations precede the chapter conclusion.

Chapter Five presents and analyses data that addresses research question one about mediational tools used to select student teachers into the four teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The mediational tools that emerge as employed in student teacher selection include databases, SMS messages, written tests, interview schedules, interviews, print media, social media and word of mouth.

Chapter Six presents findings that answer the second question on the rules that guide the selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges. What emerges is that Zimbabwean teachers' colleges develop their own rules and guidelines as there was no Ministry Policy on student selection. Consequently, each college follows its own rules and guidelines for student selection: college rules and guidelines; minimum requirements, academic performance, student teacher attributes, public service regulations and quality assurance.

Chapter Seven presents and analyses data that addresses the third research question on how stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies. Stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies in various ways. For example, some applicants use their connections in the colleges, politicians use their political muscle or threaten lecturers, Head Office personnel and other high-ranking officials submit lists of relatives to be considered, responsible authorities demand quotas and lecturers threaten to strike if their relatives are rejected. All these contradictions which emerged from the manner in which stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies are also discussed.

Chapter Eight focuses on the discussion, synthesis and conclusions of the study. In this chapter theoretical and methodological reflections are provided. A review of the study is also offered. This is followed by a discussion of findings. After this, I present contributions of the study, followed by implications based on the study. The chapter conclusion is then provided.

In the next section, I define important terms to show how these are understood and used in this study.

1.10 Definition of key terms

The following section defines the key terms and concepts that are used in the study. The purpose of defining the terms is to highlight how such terms are understood and applied in the study.

Student teacher selection can be defined as the process of choosing the right candidates with the necessary qualifications and skill to fill the vacancies in an institution (Johnson 2020). In this study, selection was choosing the right teacher candidates with the required and appropriate qualifications to fill the teacher training vacancies available in the colleges. The process included sending out invitations to interviews, interviewing applicants, giving them tests to write, etc.

Student teachers were the teacher trainees enrolled and studying in teacher training colleges to become qualified teachers. During TP they work under the supervision of a licensed classroom teacher to gain skills and experience (Ryan, Young and Kraglund-Gaunthier 2017). A student teacher is, therefore, an individual training to become a teacher. The student teachers involved in this study were in their first and third year and they were on their campuses at the time of the study.

The pre-service teacher is defined as the student enrolled in a teacher preparation programme, who is expected to successfully complete the requirements, including course work and field experience, before being awarded a teaching license (Ryan, Young and Kraglund-Gaunthier 2017). In this study, pre-service teachers are also referred to as student teachers or teacher trainees.

Teacher education is defined as the professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable to make them efficient and effective in their work, in accordance with the needs of a given society at any point in time (Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin 2015). In other words, teacher education focuses on three issues: teaching skills, where teaching techniques, approaches and strategies are considered; sound pedagogical theory, philosophical, sociological and psychological knowledge; and professional skills such as counselling skills, interpersonal skills and management skills. Thus, teacher education focuses on practice and methodologies and all the teaching theories required.

Teacher training is defined as the acquisition of skills to meet specific goals in real-life situations (Sethmini 2021). It involves closed skills, like the management of a classroom, the identification of students and their skills or the maintenance of a grade book. In other words, teacher training is the practical work, skills and performance of a teacher in the classroom. The key difference between teacher training and teacher education is that teacher training involves learning in real-life classroom situations while teacher education is knowledge about modes of learning and education (Sethmini 2021). In addition, teacher training is about improving performance and teacher education is focused on improving the mind. In this study, teacher training is understood from Farooq Asif (2013) and Rao (2004) who explain that while *training* is a generally narrow concept, implying skills acquisition where drill and routine are essential elements, aimed at bringing job excellence or producing competent job performers, it is also about getting theoretical knowledge and expertise and proficiency in methodology of teaching and its applicability in the classroom. This suggests inclusion of higher order thinking and cognitive aspects and greater framework of knowledge or comprehension, emphasising the psychomotor domain of learning.

Having introduced and provided a background to the study, the next chapter discusses reviewed relevant literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study seeks to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe. The previous chapter introduced and contextualised this study illustrating that the Zimbabwean national economic downturn created massive retrenchments and high unemployment rates. Consequently, the retrenched, the unemployed and high school graduates viewed teaching as the only window of hope for employment following training. This created extraordinary teacher training demand as retrenched, the unemployed, as well as O and A Level graduates, all competed for admission into teacher training. Contrarily, there was apparently no commensurate infrastructural and other resource development in the colleges: they could only accommodate a few hundred students. Notwithstanding that teacher training colleges grappled with huge numbers of applicants, very little is known about the selection tools, rules and procedures of student teacher selection into these colleges. Thus, through a multiple-site case study of four teacher training colleges, this study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in selected colleges in Zimbabwe.

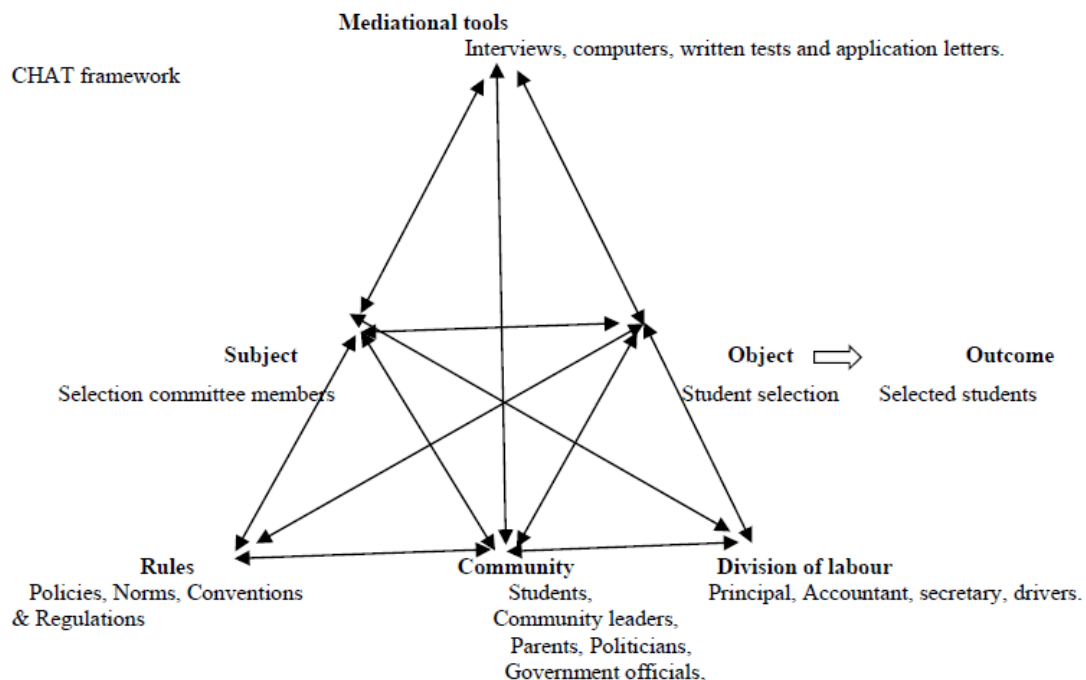
This chapter was informed by the notion that in order to understand the dynamics of student entry into teacher education in general, and in the four selected colleges under scrutiny in this piece of work in particular, it was necessary to review related literature around how student teachers are selected. Therefore, the chapter examines the broad issues relating to student teacher selection into teacher training. I reviewed literature that is related to student teacher selection into colleges from global, regional and national contexts. The review helped me to narrow the topic from recruitment to student teacher selection and provided me with literature that has already been written on my topic, indicating the gaps that exist to which my study would contribute.

In this chapter and in the thesis as a whole, literature sources are mostly current. However, a few dated sources were also consulted and cited due to the pertinent information that they have which is not available in other sources. Literature in this chapter is organised conceptually, drawing concepts from my questions to ensure that all research questions are adequately

addressed. The chapter is organized into six sections. The discussion begins with a summary of the elements of CHAT, to help relate the literature to the nodes or elements of the framework, followed by literature related to tools used in student selection from the global, regional and local contexts. Subsequent to this is a discussion of literature related to rules used to select student teachers from the three contexts. The last section reviews literature addressing stakeholder responses to the demand for vacancies which also draws on studies from global, regional and national contexts.

From the CHAT perspective the framework for this study, the mediational means, tools and artefacts, represents psychological and materials resources, i.e., the conceptual capital, internal and external instruments and material tools and resources that enable the subject to act on the object in order to attain the outcome (Mukeredzi 2009; Marwan 2019). It is these psychological and material tools and artefacts that enable achievement of the object – student selection and its transformation into an outcome, i.e., selected students. In this study, mediational tools and resources included the psychological means (knowledge, experiences, language), and material means (interviews, computers, written tests, application letters) as reflected in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Element (nodes) of the CHAT activity system



Adapted from Engstrom 2001

In the activity system in this study the object of activity was student selection. The subjects were the selection committee members who enacted the object, that is, who engaged in the selection process using mediational tools like interviews and tests. The community consisted of college staff, students, community leaders, politicians and chiefs, government officials, parents and donors, responsible authorities and others. These are the people who had an interest in the object (student selection) and also the outcome (selected students). A detailed discussion of the CHAT framework is provided in Chapter 3.

Two things should be stated upfront. First, there seems to be a paucity of literature on student teacher selection into teacher training colleges across the globe, hence, studies critically reviewed in this chapter are mainly in the medical field. Secondly, at the national level, in Zimbabwe, a literature search did not yield any academic work on the phenomenon of student teacher selection, which strongly justifies the need for this piece of work. The following section critically analyses literature on the mediational tools and criteria used in student selection in an international context.

2.2 Mediational tools used in student selection

In the U.S.A. Jacob (2016) studied ways of improving the teacher selection process and employed three tools to select teachers, namely, subject specific written assessment, a 30-minute structured interview and a teaching “audition”. The goal for the study was to find measures that were feasible to administer and which would predict which applicants would be most successful as classroom teachers. The scores for the three selection measures were analysed using regression analysis and this approach used a positivist paradigm. Findings indicated that these three measures strongly predicted an individual’s performance in the classroom. In contrast to Jacob with regards to content knowledge, Darling-Hammond (2000) found little relationship between measures of subject matter knowledge and teacher performance as measured by student outcomes. Still with reference to content knowledge, Byrne (1983) found mixed results with 17 studies showing a positive relationship and 14 showing no relationship between content knowledge and teacher performance. However, referring to the mixed results, Fong-Yee and Normore (2013) conclude that teachers who hold college majors or minors in the subject area that they are teaching, especially in Maths and Science, positively impact student learning in these subject areas. With regard to interviews, Byrne (2004) argues that interviews as a selection tool may not be effective due to the

subjectivity of judgments. Factors influencing these are often found to be assessing personality more than potential ability to do the job. While Jacob's study was about qualified teacher selection, it informs my study which seeks to determine where interviews could possibly be used in the selection process. In addition, the study was in the education field, seeking to select teachers who would be effective in the classroom. The purpose of a comprehensive and systematic student teacher selection process is to ensure that likely effective teachers are selected and trained, hence, the value for my study of this study of teachers. Jacob (2016) points out that wise selection of student teachers is the most effective means of improving the teacher workforce. While my study uses semi-structured interviews to understand the dynamics of entry into teacher training, Jacob's study used structured interviews to select teachers. This makes Jacob's study relevant as it prompted me to check whether teacher colleges in Zimbabwe used interviews in student teacher selection. Jacob (2016) used three measures: a written assessment, a 30-minute structured interview and a teaching "audition" to generate data for exploring the teacher participants whereas my study investigates student teacher selection using interviews, focus group discussions and observation to understand the tools used in the process. The use of the positivist paradigm and regression analysis which were adopted in Jacob's study, is contrary to my study which used an interpretive paradigm, a multiple-site case study design and qualitative methodologies.

While Jacob et al. (2016) in the USA focused on teacher selection, Griffin and Wilson (2010) in Australia studied admissions officers and medical students to investigate selection processes. Employing a survey for admissions officers and interviews for medical students, data were generated and a multilevel analysis model was adopted to analyse data. Griffin and Wilson (2010) investigated whether interviewer personality, sex or being of the same sex as the interviewee, accounted for the variance between interviewers' ratings in a medical student selection interview. The study found that interviewers were not biased towards applicants of their own sex and that the type of training was likely to reduce the variance between interviewees. This study is relevant to my study as Griffin and Wilson used interviews to generate data to investigate student selection. However, Griffin and Wilson (2010) focused on medical student selection and used mixed methods, contrary to my study which adopted a qualitative approach for data generation and analysis.

Still in the field of medical education, Goho and Blackman (2006) in Canada studied medical students to assess the effectiveness of using selection interviews for student selection for admission. This exploratory study located in a positivist paradigm used meta-analysis to

unpack and explain the quantitative data. My interpretive qualitative study employed interviews to determine not the effectiveness of interviews in student selection but to understand whether interviews were used as tools for selection. Findings in Goho and Blackman's (2006) study showed a very small effect on the predictive power of selection interviews for academic success and indicated modest positive power for predicting clinical success. In support of these findings, Kreiter et al. (2004), while investigating the effectiveness of selection interviews as a tool, found that interview scores displayed low to moderate levels of reliability. However, contrary to the above findings, Jacob (2016) found strong predictive power of interviews. While Goho and Blackman's study was quantitative, it was relevant and informed my study with some aspects to look out for during the process, given that it was about student selection where selection interviews were used. From the students' 'stories', my study also determined what students said about the effectiveness of interviews in student selection. Further, while the study discovered the small predictive power of interviews as a selection tool, this study was carried out in Canada on medical students, while my study was about student teacher selection into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

Goho and Blackman (2006) in Canada studied the effectiveness of selection interviews in selecting medical students. In Australia, Sladek et al. (2016) studied three sub-quotas of medical students: international, indigenous and rural. The study investigated the degree to which three elements – the Graduate Australian Medical School Admission Test (GAMSAT), the Grade Point Average (GPA) and the interview score of the Flinders University selection model – predicted performance across all four years of its medical course. Using semi-structured interviews, like in my study, to collect data and employing statistical analysis including the use of SPSS, data were analysed. Results showed that there was a significant but small negative relationship between the interview and both the GPA and GAMSAT respectively. While the study was within the medical field, it gave me pointers to look out for in using interviews in my study as it focused on student selection and the selection tools used. My study also sought to determine the tools that were used in student selection. Interview scores allocated to applicants, based on their performance in their school-leaver grades, as well as performance during selection interviews, were also used to determine student suitability for selection. The Australian study employed the positivist paradigm because it utilized statistical analysis for data analysis, whereas my study was within the interpretive paradigm which adopted qualitative techniques.

Contrary to Sladek et al. (2016) who researched medical students in Australia, Kadmon and Kadmon (2016) in Germany studied medical students entering university through central admission, delayed admission and local admission. The aim of the study was to examine the justification for a Test for Medical Studies (TMS) based strategy to reduce the admission of potentially weak best school-leavers and enhance the admission of potentially able candidates with mediocre school-leavers grades. To generate data statistical methods were employed including examining TMS scores by multiple linear regression and ANOVA by TMS categories. Like Goho and Blackman (2006) in Canada, the German study was quantitative research which used statistical methods to analyse data. Results showed that the TMS differentiated between potentially successful and less successful students in both GPA categories. Mediocre school-leavers (delayed admission) with exceptionally high TMS results reached better pre-clinical examination results than best school-leavers (central admission) with mediocre TMS results. In support of these findings, Sahlberg (2010) argued that past test performance is a poor predictor of teacher aptitude. Those students who performed exceptionally well in the TMS results were not necessarily those who had done well in the GPA. Thus, this result justifies the use of the TMS to facilitate the participation of mediocre school-leavers in the competition for admission slots. In my study, what this implies is that good O level results would not necessarily predict good performance during the programme or an effective teacher at the end of the programme. Thus, the German study informed my study in that it prompted me to examine closely how applicants' scores were utilised in student selection in the colleges explored. Further, it was relevant because it was like my study of student selection and admission processes, notwithstanding that participants were medical students in a university whereas my study was on student teachers in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. Kadmon and Kadmon's (2016) study was located in a positivist paradigm which used statistical methods to generate and analyse data but my study adopted an interpretive paradigm which used qualitative methods to generate and analyse data.

Still at the global level, Lukas and Samardzic (2015) from Bulgaria studied the correlation between enrolment in teacher training colleges in developed countries and developing countries and the existence of mutual relations between the conditions of entry to teacher training colleges and the achievements of 15-year old students in the selected countries. The aim of this study was to point out the cause-effect relationship and interconnectivity of conditions of entering teacher training colleges in developed countries and developing countries. The randomly selected four developed countries included Finland, Japan, Korea and Singapore and

the four developing countries were Turkey, Russia, Croatia and India. Comparative analysis correlated entry requirements to teacher colleges in the developed countries and developing countries. Educational achievements of 15-year old students were analysed and qualitatively presented using statistical results of PISA studies published in 2013. Research results showed that developed countries achieved better results in PISA tests which portrays the connection between the selection of more capable candidates for the teaching profession and student achievement. Results also showed that developed countries had stricter entry requirements, for example, additional assessment of character, examination of attitudes and willingness to learn and practical exams for student selection into teacher training colleges. They had a better understanding of the importance of selecting the best candidates into the teaching profession. Supporting that developed countries have stricter entry requirements, Sahlberg (2013) indicates that in Finland (one of the developed countries) a rigorous entry process and tight control of quality at the entry into teaching are maintained and only “the best and the brightest” are admitted. This was a relevant study which influenced me to examine the prevalence of some such tools in student selection into teacher training in the colleges explored. It, therefore, became vital in my study to assess whether such tools as written and practical tests, recommendation letters, interviews and entrance examinations that were used to select students in other countries were also used in student teacher selection in Zimbabwe. While Lukas and Samardzic (2015) used a positivist paradigm, a quantitative approach, random sampling and comparative analysis, my study was located in the interpretive paradigm, where a multiple-site case study design with a qualitative approach for data generation and qualitative analysis were adopted.

While Lukas and Samardzic (2015) studied student selection, Faiza et al. (2015) in the USA studied 270 pre-school teachers and focused on assessing teacher performance and developing selection mechanisms for hiring effective teachers. The aim of the study was to assess the teachers’ skills and to detect and identify effective classroom interactions using the Video Assessment of Interactions and Learning. Using an interpretive paradigm and purposive sampling methods to select 10 sites to carry out the study and observation technique to generate data, findings showed that Video Assessment of Interactions and Learning (VAIL) reliably measured teachers’ interaction detection and identification skills. However, Wiens et al. (2021) who studied pre-service teachers, did not find an association between identifying interactions on the VAIL and the classroom organization dimension of the class. This study informed my study in the sense that it used an interpretive paradigm, a qualitative approach and purposive

sampling methods. It also employed observation and discussed teacher selection tools which gave me hints on how to carry out these procedures. In addition, assessment tools like the VAIL which were used in the Faiza et al. (2015) study were recommended for use to select student teachers into teachers' colleges. However, while Faiza et al. (2015) used auditions and videos as tools to select teachers, my study sought to establish whether such tools were used in student selection into teacher training in Zimbabwe.

Like Faiza et al. (2015) in the USA, Patterson et al. (2015) in the UK studied medical students and focused on identifying selection methods that reliably evaluate non-academic attributes. Patterson et al. (2015) identified eight selection methods, including aptitude tests, academic records, personal statements, references and situational judgment tests. Lukas and Samardzic (2015) had similar findings to Patterson. They argued that diverse tools were utilized to select student teachers in developed and developing countries. Patterson et al.'s (2015) study informs my study in the sense that it addressed student selection methods and made use of academic records as one of the tools to select students. This made me examine closely how academic records were used in student teacher selection in my study and whether there were any other complementary tools employed. However, while Patterson et al. (2015) focused on identifying selection methods that reliably evaluated non-academic attributes, my study examined whether personal attributes were sought during student teacher selection as I focused on understanding the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Patterson et al. (2015) examined student selection methods into the medical field while my study was concerned with student teacher selection into teacher education.

While Patterson et al. (2015) focused on identifying selection methods, Raidal, et al. (2019) from Australia studied veterinary students entering a degree programme and focused on student selection processes. The objective was to determine demographic details of applicants to the veterinary degree programme and relate this information to student processes. Raidal et al. (2019) employed univariable and multivariable analysis to analyse data. Results indicated that gender, rurality, socio-economic background and academic achievement all significantly influenced written application scores and interview scores in the multivariate models. In support of these findings, Mirashirafi, Bol and Nakhaiezadeh (2013) found that parental education, parental job and socio-economic status of family significantly affected entrance examination grades and, consequently, university and college acceptance. Furthermore, rural background, written application scores, number of applications, pre-entry academic history and achievement also significantly affected the chances of receiving an interview. Informed by

Raidal, et al. (2019) in my study I examined whether these aspects were given any consideration in student selection. Chances of receiving an offer and subsequent programme entry were significantly influenced by academic background, interview score and pre-entry academic achievement. Male applicants were more likely to receive an offer but gender had no effect on programme entry. Raidal, et al.'s (2019) study is similar to my study as it was about student selection and similar selection processes including written application and interview processes were used albeit target student fields and contexts were different. The issue of gender in student selection into teachers' colleges was insignificant in my study given that in Zimbabwe primary school teaching is mainly dominated by women. This is consistent with findings by Hoque and Zohora (2014) which show the bulk of the statistics from around the world consistently confirm that the primary school teaching profession is dominated by the female gender. However, Raidal et al.'s (2019) study dealt with veterinary degree programme students at university level while my study focused on student teachers in teachers' colleges. While Raidal, et al. (2019) used the positivist paradigm and univariable and multivariable analysis methods, my study was located in the interpretive paradigm and adopted multiple site case studies and qualitative approaches. Moreover, Raidal et al.'s (2019) study focused on showing the relationship between selection process and demographics, indicating which demographic influences application and which demographic influences the interview and receiving the offer, contrary to my study that focused on understanding the dynamics of student teacher selection into teacher education. Like Patterson et al. (2015), Raidal et al.'s (2019) study shows that various tools can be used to select students including application letters, interview invitations and offer letters. This prompted me to look out for such tools in my study.

Still in relation to tools used to select student teachers into teachers' colleges, Thompson and Shulruf (2019) from Australia studied undergraduate medical student selection. The aim of the study was a) to establish a valid set of criteria for identifying students who would struggle with the course and b) to identify factors that would best predict students who would struggle with their performance. Discriminate Function Analysis was the appropriate approach used to assess whether pre-admission academic achievement – the Undergraduate Medicine Admission Test (UMAT) – and interview scores had a predictive effect regarding likelihood to struggle. Discriminate Function Analysis is a tool/method used to determine which variable discriminates between two or more groups, in this case between UMAT and interview scores. The results showed that lower UMAT and poorer interview scores were found to have a small predictive effect. Lower pre-admission academic achievement in the form of Australian

Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or Grade Point Average (GPA) were found to be the best positive predictors of whether a student was likely to struggle. The results of the study suggested that admission test data can predict who among the admitted students is likely to struggle with the programme. Informed by Thompson and Shulruf (2019), in my study I tried to examine whether lower or poorer O level results and lower interview scores were viewed as predicting that a student would struggle with the programme in college. The study by Thompson and Shulruf (2019) relates to my study in the sense that this was about student selection and used interviews. However, the study used Discriminate Function Analysis to analyse data and the use of such an approach suggests a positivist paradigm, whereas my study used an interpretive/qualitative paradigm.

In the Netherlands Wouters, Croiset and Kusrkar (2018) studied medical students. The aim of the study was to investigate the effects of selection on the medical student population and applicant pool in the Dutch setting. Using an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach, Wouters examined six papers: two quantitative studies, one qualitative, two mixed methods studies and one perspective paper based on a review of the literature. Findings indicated that in comparison with a lottery approach, selection does not result in a student population with better motivation, engagement and performance, both in the clinical and pre-clinical phases of the study. However, in contrast, Wouters et al. (2016) found that selected students were more motivated but did not show different types of motivation when compared to non-selected students. Informed by Wouters, Croiset and Kusrkar (2018), in my study I examined whether motivation to join teaching was an aspect that influenced student selection. Wouters' study relates to my study in the sense that it uses the same interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. While the study examined six papers to generate data, my study interviewed participants, organised focus group discussions and observed live prospective students' selection interviews in the colleges. Furthermore, while Wouters' study focused on the effects of selection on medical students, my study focused on understanding student teacher selection processes into teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

Concomitant to Wouters, Croiset and Kusrkar (2018), the Work Psychology Group (2015) from the United Kingdom also studied medical students. The aim of the study was to explore the links between trainee General Practitioners' selection scores and their performance on the Royal College of General Practitioner licensing examinations. The approach included the use of a positivist paradigm which guided the study, an exploratory case study design, Clinical Problem-Solving (CPS) for assessing the application for medical knowledge in a clinical

setting and the Situational Judgment Test (SJT) for assessing non-clinical attributes and behaviour. Tools used to select students included the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) and the Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA) test. Statistical tests were used to examine the nature of the relationship between selection scores and performance. Results showed that there was a clear link between selection test scores and subsequent performance on the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners. However, in a study on the Indian population, Sulphrey (2010) found that there was no relationship between eligibility test scores and overall academic performance among business students. The Work Psychology Group (2015) study was relevant to the current study as I also examined whether aspects like academic performance were given any consideration in student selection. In addition, while the study used a positivist paradigm, exploratory case study and statistical tests, my study used an interpretive paradigm, multiple-site case study and qualitative approach.

Schripsema et al. (2014) from the Netherlands also studied medical students. The objectives of the study were a) to analyse whether students admitted to one medical school based on top pre-university grades, a voluntary multifaceted selection process or lottery, respectively differed in study performance; b) to examine whether students who were accepted in the multifaceted selection process outperformed their rejected peers; and c) to analyse whether participation in the multifaceted selection procedure was related to performance. Methods used included a positivist paradigm, ANOVA modelling, logistic regression and comparison tests. Findings indicated that the top pre-university grade group achieved higher knowledge test scores and more Year 1 course credits than all other groups. In addition, the group of students accepted in the multifaceted selection process obtained higher written test scores than the lottery-admitted group that had not participated. Further to that, the lottery-admitted group that had not participated in the multifaceted selection process earned fewer Year 1 and 2 course credits than all other groups. Therefore, participation in the multifaceted selection procedure seemed to be predictive of higher performance. More importantly, a top pre-university grade point average was the best predictor of performance. In contrast to this finding, Sulphrey (2010) found that there was no relationship between eligibility test scores and overall academic performance among business students in the Indian population. The study was relevant as it influenced me to compare Work Psychology Group selection procedures with the selection tools used by teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. However, in contrast to my study which used an interpretive paradigm, multiple-site case study and qualitative approach, Schripsema et al. (2014) used a positivist paradigm, ANOVA modelling, logistic regression and comparison tests.

Besides Schripsema et al. (2014) from the Netherlands, Yusoff and Rahim (2019) from Malaysia reviewed literature on the use of the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) as an admission tool in higher education. The aim of the study was to report the validity evidence of MMI in various educational settings. A literature search was conducted through various databases including Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholar and PubMed. After appraising articles based on titles, abstracts and full texts, relevant information was synthesized following the PRISMA guidelines in reporting. Findings showed that the majority of the articles were from Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. The rest were from Germany, Ireland, the United Emirates, Japan, Pakistan, Taiwan and Malaysia. The evidence showed that MMI was a non-biased, practical, feasible, reliable and content valid admission tool. Informed by Yusoff and Rahim (2019), in my study I examined whether interviews were the only tool that influenced student selection in Zimbabwe. The Yusoff study used an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach in reporting the validity evidence of the MMI and my study used the same paradigm and approach. However, Yusoff's study focused on reporting the validity evidence of MMI as a selection tool while my study focused on understanding the tools and rules used for selection of pre-service teachers into teacher education programmes.

Another study from Malaysia was conducted by Azman et al. (2014) who also studied medical student admission methods. The aim of the study was to compare personality trait scores between two different selection methods: interview and non-interview. A comparative cross-sectional study was carried out with 197 medical students who were admitted through interviews and 199 from the non-interview group. A USMa P-I – a validated personality inventory – was used to measure personality traits. Findings showed a significant difference of mean personality traits score between the two groups. Medical students selected through interviews had higher scores in extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness, as well as lower scores in neuroticism, compared to the non-interview group. In contrast to these findings, Jones (2019) argues that, in some cases, albeit some candidates may be strong, the poorly worded verbal communication during interviews often leads not only to distortion of facts but also to distortion of thoughts and intentions which then makes interviews an unreliable selection tool. Notwithstanding observations by Jones, the finding related to higher scores provide evidence of the positive impacts of the interview process on personality traits of future medical students. This was a relevant study which influenced me to examine the prevalence of the use of the interview as a tool in student selection. However, Azman et al used the statistical mean, implying the use of a positivist paradigm, contrary to my study.

In addition to Azman et al. (2014), Ezeala, Swami and Lal (2012) from Fiji studied medical students for admission into the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS). The aim of the study was to determine the correlation between high school Form 7 scores and the aggregate scores in Year 1 of the MBBS degree programme. The secondary objectives were to determine the success rates of students in the school of medicine based on Form 7 scores and the prediction of success in Years 2 and 3, based on admission score. The study was located in a positivist paradigm and used computed Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression to determine the correlation between Form 7 scores and Year 1 final examination scores. Findings showed that Year 1 scores were positively correlated with Form 7 scores for 2008, 2009 and 2010. Similar correlations occurred between Form 7 scores and Year 2 and 3 results in 2008 but no correlation was found with Year 2 results in 2009. These findings show that Form 7 scores strongly predicted academic success in the school of medicine, providing support for its continued use. This finding is supported by results from Adeniyi et al. (2010) who found that the Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) in Nigeria was the best predictor of student performance in medicine and that this quality of SSCE needed to be considered when admitting students into medical schools.

Kotter et al. (2020) from Germany also studied medical students selected using two admission methods (pu-GPA and LMS, a 30-minute panel interview). The objective of the study was to compare students selected based either on their pu-GPA alone or based on the result of the LMS. The study design included an observational study of the LMS. Results showed that in all 79% of the LMS students were rated as absolutely suitable for the medical profession as compared to 42% of the pu-GPA students. These results indicated that it could be favourable to select medical students not only based on their pu-GPA but also using additional selection criteria. The study was relevant to my study as it prompted me to examine the different tools besides academic performance that were used in student selection.

The research critically reviewed revealed that the mediational tools employed during student selection measured both cognitive and non-cognitive attributes.

With reference to methodologies adopted in the reviewed studies, one employed mixed methods while five studies were located within the interpretive paradigm and adopted qualitative approaches and others were in the positivist paradigm, which used quantitative methodologies.

The tools that were employed for student selection included written assessments, structured interviews, auditions, GAMSAT, GPA, Medical Studies and various other tests, VAIL, observation, academic records, personal statements, references, applications, interview invitation and offer letters, motivation and various selection scores like GPA and MMI. From the CHAT perspective, the subjects – selection committee members and senior management in the institutions – employed various mediational tools, both psychological and material, to enact the object (student selection) and transform it into an outcome (selected students), working according to the division of labour as allocated and following rules as stipulated by the community within their activity systems.

From the list of tools used in student selection discussed above, interviews and academic records appeared to be the most popular tools. The next section discusses reviewed research at the regional level.

In the regional context van der Merwe (2016) in South Africa studied medical students with the intention of providing an overview of the selection procedures and tools used by all eight medical schools in the country and the student demographics (gender and race) at these medical schools to determine to what extent collective practices of student selection were achieving the goals of student diversity and inclusivity. Employing a positivist paradigm and quantitative design to collect data and descriptive analysis of data, results showed that medical schools in South Africa made use of academic and non-academic tools, including academic performance tests, National Senior Certificate results and National Benchmark Tests, as well as questionnaires and interviews, as tools for student selection as in my study, which also sought to determine the tools that were used for selection of students into teachers' colleges. Although van der Merwe used academic performance tests to select medical students, Byrne and Challen (2004) found that there is a contradictory relationship between academic performance and future performance. In addition to the contradictory relationship stated above, Holden and Kitchen (2017) argue that while academic performance is commonly used as a selection tool, it is not universally accepted as a measurement because it overlooks the applicant's verbal and interpersonal qualities. The study by van der Merwe (2016) is related to my study in the sense that it is about student selection and identifies selection tools as shown above. This influenced me to determine in my study whether academic and non-academic tools were used in student teacher selection. Van der Merwe (2016)'s study was located in a positivist paradigm and adopted a quantitative approach and descriptive analysis, contrary to my study which employed an interpretive paradigm and related approaches.

In Sri Lanka de Silva, Patheswaran and de Silva (2004) studied medical students with the aim of assessing the extent to which selected entry point selection tools predicted success in a Sri Lanka medical school. Data entry was done on MS Excel and data analysis on SPSS version 10 was used. Multiple logistics regression was used to assess the extent to which the selected entry point selection tools could predict variability in outcome measures. Drawing on the positivist paradigm to guide the study, the results indicated that the GCE A level aggregate score used as the only measure of academic performance for medical school admission in Sri Lanka appeared to be a weak predictor of performance in a medical school. Similarly, Sahlberg (2010) from Finland studying teacher selection found that academic ability is a poor predictor of success in the teacher aptitude test in a teacher training programme. This was a relevant study which prompted me to investigate factors other than academic ability that were used as tools for student selection. While my study employed an interpretive paradigm, multiple-site case study and qualitative approach for data generation, de Silva used a positivist paradigm, MS Excel and the SPSS version to analyse data.

de Silva, Patheswaran and de Silva (2004) studied medical students in Sri-Lanka, while Nagdee (2011) from South Africa studied business students. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between the selection battery (different skills or aspects of the course that were tested) and the academic performance of those students selected into the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) by examining the differences between the scores of the psychometric selection batteries and the academic performance of those students selected. A quantitative analysis was employed to analyse data in the selection battery. Guided by a positivist paradigm, the selection battery comprised of the Situation Specific Evaluation Expert (SSpEEEx), the English Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) and the 15 Factor Questionnaire (15FQ). Results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of the different components of selection batteries used and the academic performance of those students selected. However, contrary to these findings Schripsema et al. (2014) found that a top pre-university grade point average was the best predictor of performance in a medical school. Nagdee's (2011) study was relevant to my study as it prompted an examination of whether selection scores and academic performance were also used in combination to select students into teacher education programmes in the colleges explored and the extent to which academic performance influenced student selection. While Nagdee used a positivist paradigm and quantitative methods to generate and analyse data, my

study adopted qualitative methods. Moreover, my study investigated student teachers in Zimbabwe, whereas Nagdee studied the selection of MBA students in South Africa.

Like Nagdee (2011) Sulphrey et al. (2018) from Saudi Arabia studied business students. The aim of the study was to examine the extent to which the entry qualifications and eligibility tests which were used as tools for selection could be used to predict students' overall academic performance in Saudi Arabia. Guided by a positivist paradigm and using descriptive statistics-mean, standard deviation, ANOVA modelling and correlation analysis to analyse data, results showed that there was predictive validity of the High School Grade Point Average and standardized admission scores among business students. In other words, findings showed that there was a strong relationship between admission grades (High School Grade Point Average) and achievement. In support of these findings, the Work Psychology Group (2018) found that there was a clear link between selection test scores and subsequent performance on the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners assessments. The study was relevant as it influenced me to examine whether such tools as selection scores and academic performance were used in student teacher selection in Zimbabwe and the value that was attached to these selection tools. Sulphrey (2018) used a positivist paradigm, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis contrary to my interpretive/qualitative study.

Further, while Sulphrey et al. (2018) in Saudi Arabia studied business students, Nwobodo et al. (2019) from Nigeria studied medical students. The study compared the performance of medical students admitted via the Direct Entry (DE) module and the University Matriculation Examination (UME). Data of the 270 students admitted through the UME and 73 admitted through the DE mode of admission were collated, analysed and compared. Using a positivist paradigm, findings indicated that the rate of success in the 1st Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) examination was greater in the DE students (74%) compared with the UME (44%). The failure rate was higher in the UME entrants (55%) compared with the DE entrants (26%). These findings indicate that the admission tool of the DE increases the chances of academic success in medical education in Nigeria. This study influenced me to examine whether aspects like previous teaching experience were given any consideration in student selection and why such tools were used as part of the criteria.

Again, from Nigeria, Adeniyi et al. (2010) studied medical students. The aim of the study was to assess the performance of students in the first two years of medical school in Benue State University in relation to the selection tools used. Employing a positivist paradigm and

calculating the correlation coefficient of the scores in the University Matriculation Examination (UME) scores, O Level (SSCE) score and a combination of weighting of O level scores with UME (CJSC) scores, results showed that the performance of students with high derived SSCE was significantly better than those with low SSCE. The results also showed that SSCE is an effective tool and best predictor of student performance at the 100 level, hence, its adoption as part of the selection criteria. Similar findings by Ezeala, Swami and Lal (2012) in Fiji showed that Form 7 (Secondary Education in Fiji ends with the Form 7) scores were a major tool for student selection which strongly predicted academic success in the school of medicine and this supported its continued use. It was suggested that the quality of Senior Secondary Certificate results should be given good consideration in selecting and admitting students into medical schools. The use of the SSCE in Fiji as a selection tool prompted me to examine whether such tools as the O level certificate, which was used to select student teachers in Zimbabwe, were based on predictions of success on the programme. Adeniyi et al. (2010) utilised a positivist paradigm and correlation coefficient product which differed from my study. Moreover, the study focused on assessing performance of students in medicine based on the academic performance predicted by the selection tool, as opposed to my study which sought to develop an understanding of the tools that were used in student teacher selection into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

The regional studies reviewed above generally used cognitive tools for student selection and the majority investigated the selection of medical students. Only two explored the selection of business students. Thus, no study targeted the selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges.

With regards to methodologies employed, all the studies analysed adopted quantitative approaches within a positivist paradigm and used statistical methods such as Chi-square and ANOVA model for data analysis. The tools that were used to select students included academic tests, the National School Certificate, Questionnaires, Interviews, previous degrees and SSCE. The most common tool was the academic record. As in the above section on global studies, the subjects in the various organisations enacted the object to convert it into an outcome following rules as stipulated by the community through the division of labour in the activity system.

On a national level, the only somewhat related study that emerged from the literature survey was conducted by Chireshe et al. (2009) which investigated University student selection, specifically focusing on University students' attributions towards academic success or failure.

Chireshe et al. found that the A-level academic qualification as an indicator of students' readiness for university education was the major tool used for student selection into university,. Chireshe et al. argues that high school achievement is a predictor for performance in university studies.

However, no related study was identified on the national level. Considering the apparent scarcity of studies on student teacher selection into teacher education in the global, regional and national contexts, research into this area would contribute to filling this gap. The next section critically analyses studies related to the rules that guide student selection into institutions.

2.3 Rules that guide student selection

Studies critically reviewed in this section investigated rules that guided medical student selection. From a CHAT perspective, which guided this study, rules are the implicit or explicit guidelines and policies, national or institutional, which guide community members to carry out their roles and responsibilities according to the division of labour (Mukeredzi 2009; Marwan 2019). Rules regulate actions and interactions within the activity system. In the wider college activity system rules imply the policies, norms, customs, guidelines and standards that guide the activity under focus (Waite 2006). They provide the 'torch' or guide for student teacher selection into teachers' colleges.

Rosinger, Ford and Choi (2021) from the USA studied medical students and examined the importance of various selection and admissions rules among racially and economically marginalised students. Utilising a positivist paradigm to guide the study and using panel data from 2008 to 2016 and random effects analysis to analyse data, findings indicated that admission rules that often comprised a more comprehensive approach to admissions did very little to ameliorate – and in some cases, exacerbated – existent enrolment inequities. Findings also indicated that moving away from tools and focusing on rules such as academic rigour represented potentially promising strategies for expanding access at some institutions. In support of rules related to academic rigour, Kurysheva, Van Rijen and Dilaver (2019) from the Netherlands found that admission rules that related to personality and personal competencies were less important in admission decisions than rules related to grades, academic background and motivation. This study related to my study as it investigated student selection and college admission, albeit with medical students. Furthermore, the study used a positivist paradigm and

random effects analysis to analyse data whereas my study was interpretive and adopted a qualitative approach to generate and analyse data.

Like Rosinger, Ford and Choi (2021) from the USA who studied medical students Hossler et al. (2019) from the Netherlands studied medical students. The purpose of the study was to examine the use of non-academic factors as rules in selection and admission. Employing exploratory study methods and qualitative meta-analysis, including the use of qualitative interviews, results indicated that rules related to academic performance, including grades, test scores and rigour of courses, were the most important guidelines for selection and admission. In support of this finding Razack et al. (2015) found that rules related to academic excellence consistently predominated over guidelines calling for greater representativeness in medical classes. The second most important rules were contextual: the use of student, family and school background characteristics. The final set of rules used were non-academic: most commonly used were measures of student disposition and attitudinal factors. The study informs my study because it discusses rules considered for college admission and also uses an interpretive paradigm. The study also adopts a qualitative approach and qualitative data generation methods. While participants and context were different, it was vital to look out for both academic and non-academic selection rules in my study.

Again, from the medical field, Wouters et al. (2016) from the Netherlands studied rules related to medical student selection with the aim of examining the association between selection and motivation as a rule. An interpretive paradigm guided the study and qualitative approaches were used to generate data. An inductive thematic analysis was adopted for analysing data. Results showed that selected students where the motivation rule was used were more motivated than those where it was not, albeit they did not show different types of motivation compared to non-selected students. However, in contrast to this finding Wouters et.al.(2018) found that in comparison to the lottery admission rule, selection did not result in a student population with better motivation, engagement and performance, both in the clinical and pre-clinical phases of the study. In contrast to my study, this study was on medical students while my study was about student teachers.

Meyer et al. (2019) from Germany studied medical students where student selection at Hamburg medical school was based on the rule which combined the Natural Science Test (HAM-NAT) and pre-university educational attainment. The study's aim was to investigate the predictive effectiveness of the Hamburg Natural Science Test (HAM-NAT) entrance test for

selecting medical school students. The study, located in a positivist paradigm, adopted statistical data generation methods and regression analysis for data analysis. The results indicated that the HAM-NAT entrance test rule for medical school selection was of relatively low value. This study is similar to my study in the sense that it is about student selection, albeit it was on selection into the medical school and used a positivist approach and methods to determine the predictive validity of the HAM-NAT entrance test while my study focused on understanding the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education.

In addition to Meyer et al. (2019) from Germany, Patterson et al. (2016) from the United Kingdom, studied medical students entering General Practitioner training and shortlisting for use in radiology specialist training. The aim of the study was to evaluate two rules: the Clinical Problem-Solving test (CPS) and the Situational Judgmental Test (SJT) for recruitment into radiology specialty training. Findings showed that the CPS test rule had more predictive validity in radiology shortlisting than the SJT test. While the study was exploratory, my study was interpretive and used a multiple-site case study design and qualitative approaches. That this study compared two selection rules prompted me to compare rules used in student teacher selection to understand their value.

Razack et al. (2015) from the United Kingdom studied medical students to explore the selection rule that catered for class representativeness, reflecting societal diversity and competitive academic achievement. Razack et al. (2015) used semi-structured interviews to generate data, Foucault, Bourdieu and Bakhtin, including the theories of Goffman, as well as critical hermeneutics. Results indicated that the academic excellence rule consistently dominated over rules calling for representativeness in medical classes. In contrast to this finding, de Silva, Patheswaran and de Silva. (2004) in Sri Lanka found GCE qualification to be the only guideline for admission into a medical school. Razack et al.'s study was relevant to my study as it influenced me to examine whether marginalisation as a rule was considered in student selection in Zimbabwe. In spite of the similarities with my study, Razack et al.'s (2015) study was based on Goffman, Foucault, Bourdieu and Bakhtin philosophical orientations and the critical hermeneutics paradigm, contrary to the interpretive paradigm which I adopted.

Another study in the United Kingdom, by Kumwenda et al. (2018), studied postgraduate medical students to investigate the selection rule around student attributes, in particular the relationship between individual characteristics and Foundation Training. Data analysis employed SPSS and results showed a clear relationship between the students' attributes (rule)

and foundation school selection. In other words, whether or not they were allocated to their first choice of foundation school related to their attributes. Findings also showed that the foundation school selection rules did not discriminate against applicants from lower socio-demographic groups. In support of these findings, Wikstrom and Wikstrom (2020) argue that fair admissions rules are those that provide equal opportunity for all applicants, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. In my study, it became necessary to determine whether student selection rules employed by teacher training colleges offered all applicants equal opportunities. Analysis indicated that certain rules related to socio-demographic factors, including ethnicity, type of high school attended, coming from an area of high educational participation and if one got their medical degree in the United Kingdom, were the guidelines for student selection, particularly in allocating student to their preferred choices. Whether or not there were preferred areas or provinces in student teacher selection in the current study, like in Kumwenda et al.'s (2018) study needed to be established.

One study that examined the admission rules of PhD students was carried out by Posselt (2014) from the United States of America. The aim of the study was to examine the decision making in 10 highly selective doctoral programmes. Focusing on the social construction of the merit rule in PhD admissions, a comparative ethnographic case study was carried out. Interviews were conducted with 86 faculty members and 22 hours of observation of admission committee meetings were conducted. The study was guided by sociocultural theories in evaluation, decision making and disciplines. Findings revealed that diversity was an important consideration, together with research engagement and fit. Findings also revealed that initial cuts or short-listing used very standard conventional achievement rules, which undermined diversity. In contrast to these findings, Gunderman (2004) argued that the academic merit rule was the only just basis for preferring one applicant over another, that underrepresented groups were difficult to define and constantly changing and that using preferences to remedy past wrongs merely perpetuated discrimination. However, in support of diversity, Gunderman (2004) argued that past discrimination must be redressed, that the profession of medicine must produce physicians who mirrored the population they were serving and that grades and test scores were not the only way of predicting who would be a good physician. Informed by Posselt (2014) my study also examined conventional achievement guidelines like academic qualifications in student teacher selection. The study by Posselt and my study both employed a case study design and interviews and observation techniques to generate data. However,

Posselt adopted a comparative ethnographic case study guided by sociocultural theories while my study adopted CHAT and enrolment Funnel theories.

In the United Kingdom Killgore (2009) studied university students. The purpose of the study was to compare two perspectives shaping admission policy. Using interview data from 34 admissions officers at 17 elite colleges, findings indicated that elite colleges maintained that the student achievement rule determined admission. In support of these findings Geiser (2008) concluded that admissions rules that tap student mastery of curriculum content, such as high-school grades and performance on achievement tests, were stronger predictors of success in college and were fairer to poor and minority applicants than tests of general reasoning such as the SAT. Findings indicated that admissions rules were designed to maintain the colleges' elite status. Informed by Killgore I was prompted to examine whether the student achievement rule could be used in student teacher selection in Zimbabwe. While Killgore focused on comparing perspectives shaping admission policy, my study focused on understanding the rules that guided student teacher selection processes in Zimbabwe.

Finally, on the international scene, Zupanic et al. (2019) from Germany sought to identify implicit selection rules applied by assessors during the different stages of the selection procedure and to answer the question whether any internal consistency of these implicit rules may be verified for different phases of the selection procedure. This influenced me to determine in my study any implicit rules that were applied in student teacher selection and whether these were varied at different stages of the selection process. Zupanic et al. employed an interpretive paradigm, qualitative approaches and semi-structured interviews to generate data, as well as focus group analysis and content analysis to analyse data. Results indicated the major selection rules as motivation for the medical profession, performance and scholastic aptitude, personality, personal growth potential and social competence, as well as the ability to reflect, as the most important basic competence. In support of these findings Khansir (2017) argues that motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning and is the driving force sustaining it. Furthermore, Khan and Khan (2017) noted that teachers with good communication skills strengthen the relationship among the students and teacher by improving the level of understanding among teacher and students. The study was vital to my study because it influenced me to determine the rules related to soft skills that were considered in student selection into selected teacher education institutions in Zimbabwe. Zupanic et al. (2019) used content analysis and focus group analysis and investigated medical student selection, while my study explored student teacher selection and employed open coding data analysis.

From the above reviewed global studies, five adopted the positivist paradigm and quantitative research processes. One (1) study adopted the critical hermeneutics while four (4) studies were guided by the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approaches. From the global context, rules that emerged included: institutional admission rules related to academic rigor, non-academic rules, motivation rule, HAM-NAT test rule, CPS test rule, SJT test rule, academic excellence rule, student attributes rule, cognitive and non-cognitive assessment rules, outcome-based selection rule and lottery selection rule. However, Motivation and academic excellence emerged as the most popular rules for student selection. The cognitive and non-cognitive assessment rules were also used for selection into a number of programmes.

However, from the review of global studies above, student selection focused only on medical students, none of the researchers investigated student selection into teacher training.

The following section reviews studies on the rules that guide student selection at regional level. Blunt (2009) from South Africa studied PhD research supervisors in one university. The aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of successful supervisors of their rules and guidelines for identifying suitable research candidates. Utilizing purposive sampling to identify research supervisors, critical hermeneutics paradigm guided the study. To generate data, qualitative approaches including interviews were used. Blunt (2009) found that although supervisors had individual rules for selecting research candidates, there were key rules that many supervisors employed. The key rules included acknowledging the importance of selection and paying attention and time to it, looking at students' previous academic rigor and trusting and relying on their perceptions. In contrast to these findings, Posselt (2014) found that diversity was an important consideration including research engagement and fit. Findings also indicated that initial cuts or short-listing used a very high standard rule of the conventional achievement which could undermine diversity. In another study, Lunneborg (1973) found that the predictors of the ultimate rules for the PhD admissions, were a master's degree at entrance, age and marital status and first-year faculty evaluation. Informed by Blunt (2009) my study also examined whether the rules that influenced student selection in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe considered some of these biographical details. Blunt used similar qualitative research approaches to my study and as such I got pointers to what to look out for in research processes. However, the study was about PhD student selection while my study is about student teacher selection into teacher's colleges.

Still from the regional front, Abdou (2012) from Egypt studied teachers to explore the rules employed in teacher recruitment and selection into public, private and international schools. The study used interpretive paradigm, case study design, qualitative approaches including open ended interviews to generate data as well as convenient sampling and thematic analysis to analyse data. Findings of the study revealed that in public and private schools, there were implicit rules for teachers' recruitment and selection. Implicit factors that influenced teacher recruitment and selection included gender, age, religious background and appearance. While these were obviously visible, employers kept them silent. Furthermore, findings showed that principals in public schools lacked autonomy in terms of rules for teacher recruitment and selection. Contrary to this finding, Machingura (2006) found that teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe were autonomous and free to decide on their rules and regulations for student teacher selection. From these findings by Abdou (2012) and indications by Machingura, my study sought to determine whether the selection committees in the selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe were autonomous in student selection processes. While Abdou explored qualified teacher selection rules my study focused on selection rules for student teachers into teacher education.

Unlike Abdou (2012) from Egypt who studied teachers, Mirashirafi, Bol and Nakhaiezadeh (2013) in Iran studied university students. The aim of the study was to analyse the effect of student attributes rule on university admission in 2009. Using data mining methods to generate data and interpretive paradigm to guide the study, results showed that the student attributes rule had strong effects in university and college acceptance. In support of these findings, Raidal et al. (2019) also found that student attributes rule guided university admission. However, informed by Mirashirafi, Bol and Nakhaiezadeh (2013) my study also examined whether and which student attributes were considered as rules during student selection for college admission in selected Zimbabwe teacher education.

Again, from the regional front, Sandikonda (2013) from Malawi studied rules that guided selection of primary school students entering secondary school education. The study sought to evaluate the impact of the admission policy into the Malawian Secondary schools. From a CHAT perspective, a policy is a rule and in this case the admission policy represented the rules or guidelines for student selection into the secondary school. The study used experimental research design, case study, convenient sampling, survey questionnaires, interviews and participant observation to generate data. Sandikonda (2013) also utilized qualitative and quantitative approach for data analysis. Results show that in Malawi the admission policy

(rules) for pupil selection into secondary schools was formulated on the basis of secondary schools classification into three types. Due to the differences in staffing and learning environments in the three types of secondary schools in Malawi: the Above Average; the Average; and the Below Average Schools (Sandikonda 2013) the examination results and selection of students into the secondary schools in Malawi were not equal. Informed by Sandikonda (2013) whether classifications and policies existed in student teacher selection into teacher education in selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe needed to be established. While Sandikonda study resembled my study in terms of design and methods, nevertheless, the study focused on selection of students into secondary schools contrary to selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges.

Contrary to Sandikonda (2013) from Malawi who studied primary school students entering secondary schools, Tade (2015) from Nigeria studied university student selection. The study examined the correlation between prerequisite admission rules (mathematics and physics) and academic performance. Generation of primary and secondary data was conducted through literature survey, archival retrieval of students' records as well as discussions with course tutors and students. Quantitative data were analysed using the SPSS (version 17) while content analysis was used for qualitative data. Results indicated that except for the first and second semester of the first year of architecture studies, there existed no correlation between prerequisite admission rules and academic performance of students. This finding prompted me to establish the values and purposes attached to the rules or guidelines that the selected colleges used in student selection in Zimbabwe. Tade (2015) used mixed methods approach literature survey, archival of students' records and discussions with tutors contrary to the approaches and methods adopted in my study.

From East Africa, Onsongo (2009) in Uganda studied three admission rules for female students in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania which included: marginalisation, gender equity, and loans and grant. In Uganda affirmative action was in favour of marginalized groups including women. Tanzania used gender equity in society to offer female students with direct entry to university with lower cut off points. Meanwhile, Kenya provided loans and grants for the girls to enter university. The aim of the study was to examine the outcomes of affirmative action policies or rules aimed at improving access for women students to university education in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. To generate data, a survey of the student performances was carried out and comparative analysis of the strategies like lower entry scores, remedial pre-university programmes and financial assistance for disadvantaged groups were conducted. Results

showed that in Uganda and Tanzania, combination of affirmative action policies had provided for more vacancies, while the more limited interventions in Kenya had not had much impact. In support of these findings, Odaga (2020) who studied affirmative action and women in Uganda found that sixty-six percent of the sampled population would not have been admitted, had it not been for affirmative action policies. Moreover, Mareva (2014) comparing the views of male and female students on affirmative action, found that more female students than males were in favour of affirmative action policies because such policies empowered females who had been marginalised for a long time. However, Mareva (2014) found that male students in Zimbabwe were against affirmative action rules arguing that this was against the spirit of gender equality and that such policies lowered university academic standards. Informed by Onsongo (2009), in my study, I also examined whether there were any affirmative action policies that influenced student teacher selection in the selected colleges in Zimbabwe. While Onsongo study focused on policies for improving the access of female students to university, my study focused on understanding the selection rules and processes for entry of pre-service teachers into teacher education.

Besides Onsongo (2009) from Uganda, Matsepe et al. (2020) from South Africa studied admissions policies of three universities in South Africa. The aim of the study was to investigate the nature of the selection and admissions policies in place at three universities in South Africa, namely the University of Witwaterand (Wits), the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of Kwa Zulu Natal (UKZN). Matsepe adopted an interpretive paradigm as well as case studies design and semi-structured interviews were employed to generate data as well as document analysis. Results indicated that admissions rules at Wits were entirely based on academic merit. This was based on the Admission rule system focusing on those students perceived as capable of achieving and succeeding in their university studies. In support of the academic merit admissions, Flejoles and Depamaylo (2011) found that there was moderate, direct and significant relationship between the performance in the entrance examinations and level of performance in College Algebra and the performance in English Aptitude Test and College Algebra. On the contrary, Jenkins (2020) found that only 31% of the great medical innovators possessed no medical degree and 24% of the great medical innovators would likely have been denied entry to medical schools by today's standard. From these findings, Jenkins et al. (2020) put to question the essentiality of prerequisites for admission to specific programmes like medicine and teaching. Meanwhile, studying whether academics in Kenya would differ in their support for merit versus equity values in student

admission, Munene (2006) found that overall academics gave overwhelming support for the use of merit as the admission rule in higher education while equity received only slight support. Furthermore, Jiampietro (2013) argued that the merit rule is what makes a student a worthwhile applicant whether through good character, excellent grades or test scores or outstanding extracurricular - it would not matter which of those factors got a student accepted into college. The findings also indicated that admissions rules at UCT adopted racial categorization. The race-based admission policy was designed to address access issues and redress the injustices of the past. In support of the racial admission rules, Zisk (2021) argued that a consideration of race in the admissions process was a necessary ingredient in achieving diversity. Enrolling a diverse student body, Zisk (2021) argued was critical to higher education because it promoted cross racial understanding, helped break down racial stereotypes and enabled students to better understand persons of different races. Furthermore, from the medical position, Zisk (2021) argued that to best serve people of all races, backgrounds and ethnicities, the pool of physicians should be drawn from all races, backgrounds, and ethnicities. In addition to that, Zisk argued that racial diversity was more important in the delivery of health care because people of color have a degree of trust in physicians who look like them. The UCT University required applicants to declare their racial classification- White, Indian, Asian, Coloured and African. In contrast to the use of racial admission, Chen (2020) argued that race-based affirmative action degrades meritocracy by introducing a factor to the admission process which was beyond the applicants' control. Moreover, Leef (2012) indicated that preferring somewhat significantly weaker students because of their ancestry, affirmative action rules exacerbates racial tensions and discourages students who know they will benefit from the preferences from doing their best work in school. The racial and academic based admissions rules contributed to the important factor of student diversity. Results also indicated that admission rules at UKZN adopted and maintained an admissions policy grounded on educational disadvantaged/marginalised or fair discrimination. In support of the educational disadvantaged policy, Adeyemi (2001) found that there was no significant difference in academic performance among students admitted through catchment area rule, university discretion rule and educationally disadvantaged rules. This institution used quotas in its admission policy. For instance, 15% are selected from students from quintile 1 or 2 schools. On the contrary, Mashininga (2019) from Malawi argued that another negative consequence of the quota system rule is that the bright students fail to reach tertiary education because of the district they come from. In support of Mashininga, Adetunji et al. (2016) from Nigeria argues that the quota system rule is unjust because students with lower scores are often granted admission depending

on the region or state that they come from. The Matsepe study influenced me to examine whether and how the quotas system rule was used in student selection in the selected colleges in Zimbabwe. The Matsepe study and my study both employed case study and semi-structured interviews, however, the Matsepe added document analysis while I included observation.

Still on the regional level, Adeyemi (2001) from Nigeria studied the catchment area admission rule. The objectives of the study were to critically examine the desirability of the catchment area policy in the admission process in Nigeria and to analyse the implementation and implications of the catchment factor as one of the rules used in the admission process in Nigerian universities. Using three purposively sampled universities, data was generated from JAMB, National Universities Commission (NUC) and Federal Universities and admissions officers using prepared checklists. Data was analysed using simple percentages and ratio to compute the waste rate difference. Among the many findings, what also emerged was that admission ratio into the universities among states was not proportional to the size of enrolment at the terminal grade of the secondary school level in these states which justifies affirmative policies such as the redress of the imbalance. With reference to affirmative action, Moore (2005) argues that affirmative action rules were misconstrued and attacked as a reversed discrimination and sometimes a policy based on race alone. Adeyemi study was vital to me in the sense that I was led to examine whether affirmative action policy was also prevalent in student teacher selection in the selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. While Adeyemi examined admission policy in Nigeria, my study focused on understanding the student teacher selection rules in selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

Another study that examined the affirmative action policy was from Uganda by Odaga (2020). The purpose of the study was to examine how affirmative action policy was used to govern access to higher education for the disadvantaged. In Uganda, a gender based affirmative action rule was incorporated into college admission. Data generation and analysis was conducted using existing empirical data at district and college levels. Findings revealed that affirmative action rule had a substantial effect as 66% of the sampled population would not have been admitted, had it not been for affirmative action. Findings also revealed that the affirmative action rule did not work for the historically disadvantaged: it worked for specific categories of women from specific regions, districts and high schools; on the grounds that it was implemented for competitive reasons. Odaga study prompted me to examine whether there was any rule that related to affirmative action in the colleges investigated in Zimbabwe and the extent and circumstances to which that rule was applied. In contrast to findings on the

affirmative action rule, Mareva (2014) found that reasons for its inclusion related to contravening the spirit of gender equality and lowering university academic standards.

Studies reviewed above from the regional context with respect to research design and methodology, two studies adopted the positivist paradigm and quantitative approaches. Most of the studies adopted the interpretive paradigm, case study design and qualitative approach.

The regional studies evaluated involved PhD supervisors, teachers, and primary school students entering secondary schools as well as university students. Rules that emerged included implicit rules, student attributes, institutional admission policies, and admission rules. Institutional admission policies emerged as the most popular rules guiding selection in the various institutions.

Thus, from the evaluated studies the subjects – the selection committees, followed the rules stipulated by their organisational communities and performed their allocated roles and responsibilities according to the division of labour in the respective activity system.

Further, of all the regional studies analysed and discussed above, it is evident that none of them investigated rules for selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges, creating a gap to which this study contributes. Having discussed literature related to rules for student selection, the next section analyses studies related to how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies.

Like in the previous section on rules, literature survey on stakeholder responses to the demand for vacancies did not yield any studies on student selection from the national context, hence only academic work from global and regional contexts is discussed.

2.4 How stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies

In this study and from the CHAT perspective which guided this study, stakeholders are the various members of the community in the activity system. Trust (2017) refers a community as a group of individuals with shared interest or culture that interact within an activity system. In other words, these were all the people with interest in the object (student selection) and the outcome (students selected). In my study these included college staff, students, community leaders, politicians and chiefs, government officials, parents and donors, parents, responsible authority and others.

From the reviewed literature (Lynaigh et al. (2018); Avci, Ring and Mitchelli (2015); Bayar and Kerns (2015) stakeholders comprise institutional leadership and staff, students, government officials, donors and alumni, parents, politicians and acquaintances. In other words, all these people had an interest in the object (student selection) and outcome (selected students).

From the CHAT framework, the community was expected to institute rules and all members of the community (stakeholders) within the activity system including the subjects were expected to abide by the community rules in student selection processes. The next section discusses international studies on how stakeholders-parents, political, students and government officials responded to the demand for vacancies.

From the U.S.A. Creecy (2021) studied 2019 college admission scandal (Operation Varsity Blues). The purpose of the study was to determine whether certain apology types resulted in similar or different consequences and stakeholder (public) response and to determine whether Operation Varsity Blues altered the college admissions process in a meaningful and substantial manner. Utilizing extant literature review as the source of data and Image Repair Theory by Benoit (1997) as the lens, the studies analysed responses from higher education-community as well as some apologies from stakeholders who wanted their daughters admitted. Results found that Felicity Huffman a parent - stakeholder and celebrity responded to the demand for vacancies by being directly involved and paying the key Worldwide Foundation \$15 000 to get her daughter's SAT answers changed and then disguised the payment as a donation to charity (Hanrahan 2021). Results also found that another parent - stakeholder Augustin Huneus Junior responded to the demand for vacancies by bribing University of Southern California – senior associate athletics director Donna Heinel and University of Southern California water polo coach. The stakeholder, (parent) paid half a million dollars to get her daughters in USC. Results also found that Mark Riddle – a stakeholder non-parent counsellor responded to the demand for vacancies by taking exams for students or corrected answers after the students took the examinations. In support of corruption that involved parents and bribes, Altbach (2020) argued that Russian stakeholders (families) pay about \$300 million annually in bribes to ensure acceptance to universities and another \$700 million once students are enrolled. Informed by Creecy (2021) I was prompted to examine how stakeholders (parents, relatives, chiefs, the religious, lecturers, government officials, politicians and acquaintances) responded to the demand for vacancies in my study. From the CHAT perspective, subject-admissions officers failed to execute their duties- to enact the object- to select students as expected by the division

of labour. Parents-stakeholders used money/bribes-mediational tool which constrain the ethical achievement of the outcome. The use of mediational tools was against the community rules and this created a secondary contradiction as it was against rules, subject and division of labour (Yamagata-Lynch 2010), in other words contradiction was not within the same node of the activity system.

Still on the global level, Bayar and Kerns (2015) from the U.S.A. studied admission scandal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The purpose of the study was to bring up the admissions scandal at the University of Illinois. The study employed a qualitative research design and documentary analysis where all newspapers regarding the admission scandal were collected, carefully scrutinized and cited or quoted different stakeholders (people). Among many findings, University stakeholders (officials) knew that certain applicants were under qualified but responded to the demand for vacancies by admitting them anyway. Findings also found that admission stakeholders (officials) complained but their objections were over-ruled. Furthermore, findings indicated that University stakeholders (trustees) responded to the demand for vacancies by lobbying for preferred students who were friends, neighbours and relatives. This finding prompted me to examine whether staff and lobbyists in the selected colleges in my study adopted such practices during student teacher selection. In addition to friends -stakeholders, findings also indicated that other stakeholders (politicians) responded to the demand for vacancies by sending admission requests to University lobbyists whose job depended on pleasing the lawmakers and University stakeholders (officials) often delayed admission notifications to weak candidates until the end of the school year to minimize the fallout from top feeder high schools. In support of findings on how politicians as stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies, Karen (1991) argued that political mobilization as well as histories among elites were both key factors in determining admissions outcomes. The study was relevant to my study as it influenced me to examine the influence of political and other stakeholders in student teacher selection in Zimbabwe. From the CHAT perspective, Creecy stated that the subject - admission officials were instructed by the University, the stakeholders and also by the community to enact the object and subsequently failed to appropriately and ethically achieve the outcome. In other words, the stakeholders did not work according to the rules and the division of labour. Lobbying for preferred students who were friends, relatives and neighbours as well as sending requests done by politicians was a secondary contradiction because that worked against community rules and was not according to the division of labour

(Jones 2014). The next section critically analyses literature related to how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies from the regional context.

From the regional setting, stakeholder responses to the demand for vacancies was examined by Kanyip (2013) in Nigeria. Kanyip studied youth and parents -stakeholders, to examine the challenges youth faced in seeking admission to Nigerian universities posed by certain factors and admission policies that had a direct effect on parents and students regarding admission. The goal of the research was to understand the experiences of students and parents as students went through the difficulties and stresses in seeking university admission. This was an exploratory qualitative research which used open ended and semi-structured interview questions to generate data. Findings indicated that gaining admission depended on a combination of merit, personal connection and money. Firstly, admission slots were always reserved for candidates connected to politicians as the godfathers. These influential persons determined who was to be admitted to a university or college (Azuoma 2012). Secondly, findings indicated that the stakeholders – youth responded to the demand for vacancies by paying heavily to gain admission. Bribes demanded were up to 100 000 naira or \$700. In support of these findings on bribes, Altbach (2020) pointed out that a university official in China demanded a payment of \$12 000 from a student whose test scores qualified him for admission to a prestigious university. Informed by Kanyip, I was prompted to examine whether stakeholders were involved in such corrupt activities during student teacher selection in Zimbabwe. Admission officers-stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by reserving vacancies for candidates connected to politicians. The youths- also stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by paying heavily bribes of up to \$700 to gain admission. From the CHAT perspective, subjects used money -mediational tools to enact the object-student selection and inappropriately achieved the outcome- selected students. The subjects, as well as community - politicians and students did not act according to the rules and division of labour thereby creating a contradiction.

2.5 Summary

The discussion above centred on the three research questions. First was a discussion on mediational tools and rules used in selecting student teachers into teacher education programmes. The discussion then proceeded to analyse research focussing on the third research question on how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies. With regards the

mediational tools, cognitive tools and interviews emerged the most popular in both the global and regional studies. Again, from both the global and regional contexts, the majority of the studies that were analysed were on selection of medical students and no study targeted selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges. However, at global level two studies targeted student teachers but, that student selection was for university entry.

With reference to the rules guiding student selection into teachers' colleges, motivation, cognitive and non-cognitive assessment rules emerged popular in the global context. Meanwhile, institutional admission policies emerged the most popular rules guiding selection in the various institutions. Like in the tools section above, all studies investigated focused on medical students at global level and none of the studies investigated rules used in student teacher selection in teachers' colleges creating a gap to which this study contributes.

Meanwhile, in response to the demand for vacancies, stakeholders in both the global and regional context, personally connected to politicians or powerful people to get their children or relatives selected into institutions. Some stakeholders who were not connected paid bribes to gain university admission. From the CHAT perspective, this was a contradiction as that was against rules and worked against the division of labour. Thus, the most common response from the stakeholders to the demand for vacancies in global and regional contexts from the reviewed studies worked against rules and division of labour.

Having discussed relevant literature on student selection processes into higher education, the next chapter discusses theoretical frameworks that were used as lenses to understand the data in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in selected teacher training colleges. The previous chapter which reviewed relevant literature highlighted that in the global and regional studies, the most common mediational tools used for selection of student teachers into teacher training colleges combined psychological and material tools and the common rules that guided the selection were motivation and academic excellence. Stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies for teacher training in diverse ways which encompassed connecting with politicians or powerful people to get their children and relatives selected into institutions, and paying bribes.

The present chapter discusses two theoretical frameworks Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engestrom 1987, 1999; 2004; Vygotsky 1981) and the Funnel Theory developed by Lewis in 1898 (Zinn and Johansson 2015). The theories facilitated understanding the phenomenon (Qureshi 2021) of student selection into selected teacher training colleges.

The main strength of CHAT which was the overarching theory in this study, was that it provided a theoretical lens (Zulu 2017) to understand how pre- service teachers entered teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The theoretical framework was vital for showing the interaction and relationship between human, non-human, and social elements of the student selection in the activity system. The theory therefore enabled understanding the ways in which individuals through interaction with other community members, mediational tools, and rules, within their division of labour, collaboratively ensured that the object (in this case student teacher selection) was pursued and transformed into an outcome (selected students). In other words, CHAT as a tool enabled me to analyse the types of interactions between subjects and other community members in the social space of the college environment (Mukeredzi 2009; Marwan 2019). However, while CHAT framework was my overarching framework which enabled me to understand and explain the interactions of the various elements of the activity system in-order

to act on the object – student selection to attain the outcome -selected students, it was not helpful in tracing and understanding the stage-by-stage movement of the prospective student teachers (pre-service teachers) on the selection journey. As a result, I had to take the Funnel theory to complement CHAT.

The Enrolment Funnel theory enabled understanding and explaining what happened at the different stages of the prospective student’s journey into teacher education and how the huge numbers of applicants got filtered through the selective stages of the process. The Funnel model also contributed to a deeper understanding of the concept of student selection (Zinn and Johansson 2015) through an examination of what the applicants did or how they did it at each stage.

These two theories are thus discussed in detail in this chapter under three aspects: historical development; principles and application; and critique. This chapter is therefore organized starting with the historical development of CHAT. Following this, is a discussion of the CHAT concepts, principles and application; and finally, its critique? Subsequent to the discussion of CHAT the Funnel theory is also discussed under similar aspects. The next section discusses the historical development of CHAT.

3.2 Historical development of CHAT

Cultural- historical activity theory (CHAT) originated from constructivism from the ideas of the Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Leont’ev and Luria in the 1920’s and 1930’s (Kim et.al 2011). The CHAT was built on the ideas of Vygotskian theory of cultural mediation in which the human (subject) action on a part of the world (object) is always mediated by culturally developed artefacts or tools (Grimalt-Alvaro and Ametller 2021). In other words, human beings make use of culturally developed tools to act on the object or targeted goal. This is supported by Mukeredzi (2009) who contends that the basic concept of Vygotsky’s theory is that all human activities are mediated by culturally created signs and tools in social interaction and higher mental functions. Further, Vygotsky, emphasized that human consciousness or awareness is culturally mediated through artefacts, tools and language (Oberprieler and Leonard 2015). The thinking was that if there is a need (object) one would not directly respond to the environment, but has to use tools like language and signs which are products of culture. Such culturally developed tools would intercede between them – between the subjects and the object (the need or the goal). All this thinking was in response to and rejection of the

behaviourists who believed that for every stimulus there is a response. Thus, Vygotsky, initiated the concept of artefact mediated action where human activities are connected to the object (need or goal) by cultural tools including language and signs (McAvinia 2016). Mediation is a tool/artefact that plays an important role in human living and their environment because tools /artefacts shape the way human beings interact with reality (Hasan 2014). Further, Cryer (2020) contends that tools are core ideas of CHAT given that humans make, employ and adapt tools of all kinds to work with.

Vygotsky, was interested in consciousness which he regarded it as a collaborative/ collective process and not individual effort (Mukeredzi 2009). To this end, consciousness is not psychological, but comes through collaborative action. To this end Mukeredzi further points out that such consciousness does not sit at an individual psychological level, (in a person's head) but a product of mediated joint efforts. In this study, student selection was engaged on by a team- selection committee members who employed various mediation tools, to act on the object to obtain an outcome in line with Vygotsky's thinking. The subjects collaborated with other community members (stakeholders, other college staff), each individual performing their roles according to the division of labour, following stipulated rules within the activity system (teacher training college), according to Engestrom (2004). Vygotsky was concerned with the cultural –historical dimensions as all artefacts are developments of their culture (Zulu 2017).

In the CHAT framework, an activity is an outcome of interaction of participating subjects and community members and the main focus of any activity is the production of an outcome. There is no activity without a subject interacting with other subjects and community members (Mukeredzi 2009). In other words, activity system consists of seven elements: subject, object, artefacts, outcome rules, community, and division of labour. The relationship between these elements including the subjects and the object forms the core of an activity. Activity, is therefore not an individual endeavour, but a socially mediated process, a negotiated or relational interdependence (Mukeredzi 2009).

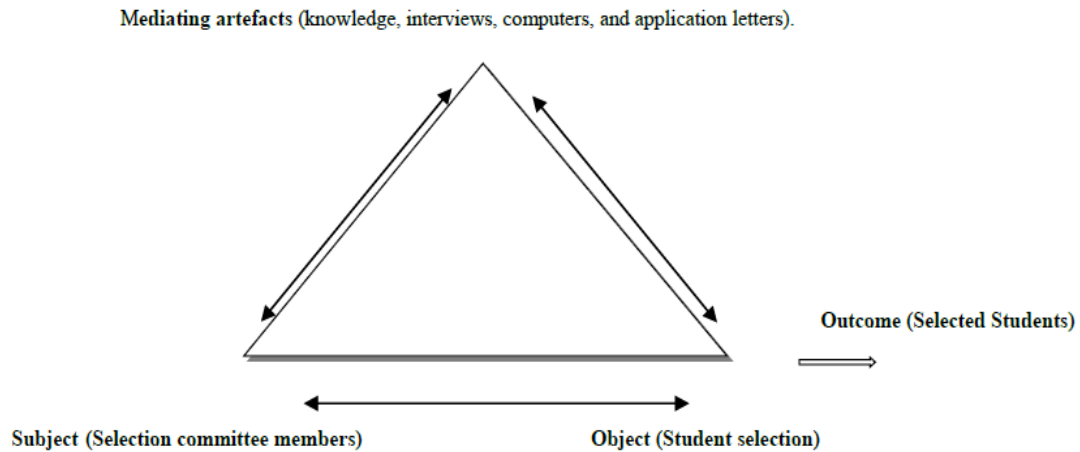
The CHAT framework has evolved through generations as discussed in the next section starting with the first generation.

3.2.1 First generation of Activity Theory

The first generation draws from Vygotsky's concept of artefact-mediated and object-oriented action (Mukeredzi 2009). Thus, Vygotsky's original simple mediational model had three

nodes: subject, object and tool (See Figure 3.1). In other words, the human (subject) uses mediational artefacts (tools) to enact the object (goal) (Engestrom 1996). The concept of artefact-mediated and object-oriented action was a rejection of the behaviourist ideas of viewing activity as the response to stimulus.

Figure 3.1: Reformulation of Vygotsky's model of mediated activity



Adapted from Vygotsky (1978).

Activity in this conception is reformulated as composed of a subject, and an object mediated by a tool as reflected in Figure 3.1. In this basic original framework, according to Mukeredzi (2009: 73) “an activity is oriented to an object (also called motive), the “raw material” or “problem space” to which activity is directed, and the object is transformed through continued action into an outcome.”

The concept of object-oriented meant that the activity was directed by the need to enact the object or goal. Vygotsky’s idea of the activity was that it was composed of the subject and object mediated by a tool. These three elements affect each other, and together they determine the activity which will produce a particular outcome (Grimalt- Alvaro and Ametller 2021). In this case, the subject would be a person or group of people that would be engaged in an activity, and object or goal would be held by the subject and motivated the activity. Mediation would occur through the use of material and mental tools including culture and ways of thinking and language (Behrend 2014). In the context of this study, the subjects were selection committee members including the Vice Principals who enacted on the object (who engaged in student selection) which was the goal of the activity. The subjects used various mediational tools to enact the object including written tests, interview, computers, application letters etc. The use

of mediational tools ensured that the outcome of the activity (selected students) would be achieved.

However, Vygotsky's mediated action was limited in that it focused on the individual as the unit of analysis (Kim et al. 2011). Furthermore, Mukeredzi (2009) argues that the role played by other human beings and social relations in Vygotsky's triangular model is blurred. In other words, mediation by other human beings and social relations was not taken into account, in the triangular model. To address that limitation, a second generation of CHAT was developed.

3.2.2 Second generation of Activity Theory

Astudillo and Martin-Garcia 2020 indicate that it is Engstrom (1999) who showed the problem with Vygotsky's representation that it does not fully explain the social and collective nature of individual actions. In other words, the representation in the first generation did not represent individual actions as events that are part of a system of collective activities. In answer to Vygotsky's shortfall, Leontiev (1978) proposed the idea of activity analysis and the activity concept is Leontiev's greatest contribution (Astudillo and Martin-Garcia 2020). The concept of activity was defined as a historical as well as culturally and socially constructed form of action in which people are actively engaged (Fisher 2012). But, Astudillo and Martin-Garcia maintain that the concept of activity is related to the concept of motivation. Furthermore, Leontiev (1978) also maintains that the activity does not exist without a reason and likewise, human activity does not exist without a goal, except in the form of action or in a chain of actions.

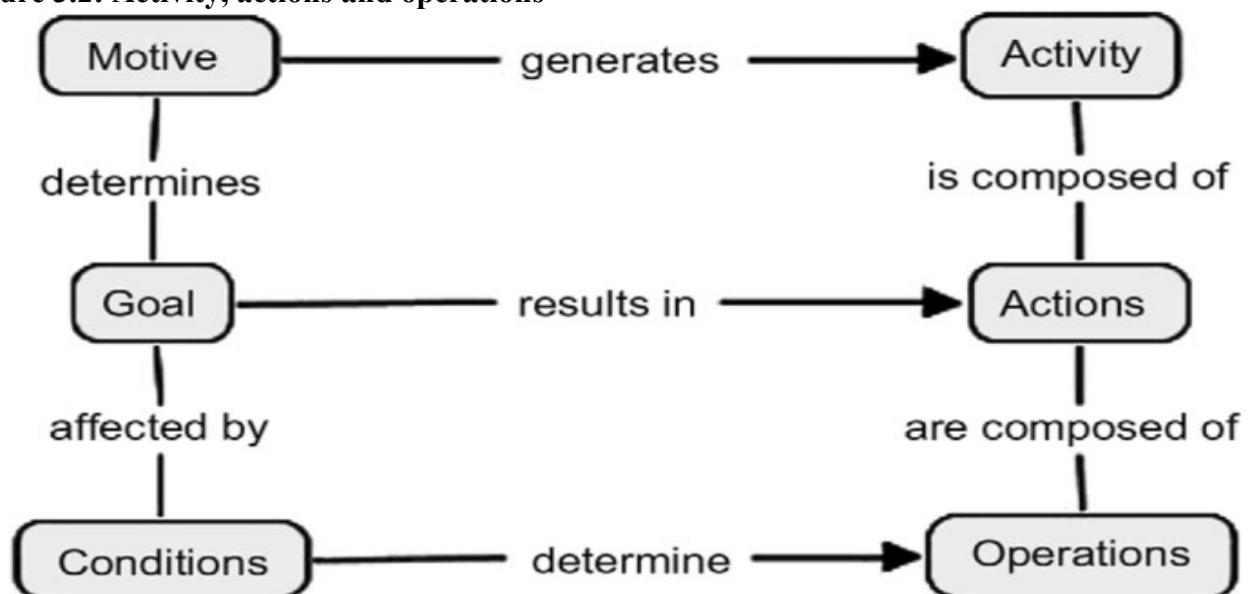
From these chains of actions, Leontiev (1978) theorized that activities were in a hierarchical structure where an activity sits at the top of the hierarchy (Hasan and Banna 2010; Hasan and Kazlauskas 2014; Crawford and Hasan 2007). According to Nussbaumer 2012, the activity is composed of actions while actions are composed of operations on one side. See Figure 3.2 below. On the other side, the motive determines the goal and the goal is affected by the conditions. Linking the two sides is that the motive generates the activity while the goal results in actions and the conditions determine the operations. Thus, the overall activity is driven by the object-related motive. Astudillo and Martin-Garcia argue that the activity is directed by an object or motive from human needs. In support of the motive, Leontiev (1978) argued that there is no such thing as objectless activity (Fisher 2012). With regards actions, Hasan and Banna (2010), point out that actions are always directed towards specific short-term goals. In other

words, actions point to what must be done to achieve the outcome of the activity. And Astudillo and Martin-Garcia (2020) contend that an activity generates actions-oriented towards goals to achieve the object. Below the actions in the activity hierarchy, operations are automatic and determined by conditions under which the activity is undertaken.

Leontiev (1978) points out that an operation is something that is performed routinely in order to complete an action in the current situation and conditions (Hasan and Banna 2010). To illustrate the three concepts –activity, actions and operations, the story of Leontiev known by his Primeval Collective Hunt was collective. Leontiev clarifies the crucial difference between individual action and collective activity. In this case while the individual action (frightening the animal) is different from the overall goal of the activity, which is the hunt, they all share the same motive which is to get food or to get meat (Mukeredzi 2009).

Operations are driven by tools at hand or the circumstances when the hunt is taking place. Separate individual actions are influenced by the motive of the activity as a whole which has three hierarchical levels of human functioning: Object-related motives drive collective activity (at the top right); Goals drive individual and group actions (middle level); Conditions and tools drive the automated operations (the lower level) – scaring the hunt. Thus, on one side Leontiev has Activity, Actions and Operations. On the other side, there is Object, Goal and Condition. In this study, the activity is student selection, this goal results or leads to actions (processes) involved in student selection which are composed of operations by subjects, and other stakeholders. The operations are determined by the tools and conditions available and all focusing towards the goal.

Figure 3.2: Activity, actions and operations



Source: Adapted from Nussbaumer 2012

Thus, to analyse any activity, there is need to identify all actions and operations that support the activity (Astudillo and Martin-Garcia 2020). In other words, to analyse student selection, (all actions/processes) there is need to understand and ensure all operations in the activity function effectively. Thus, according to Mukeredzi (2009) activity is therefore realized as individual and cooperative actions, and the chains and networks of such actions are interrelated by the same overall object and motive that needs to be achieved. In other words, student teacher selection is through both individual and collective actions which Mukeredzi notes, requires negotiation and renegotiation and interrelated actions, to achieve the same overall goal of students selected. According to Astudillo and Martin-Garcia 2020, although Leontiev overcame the limitation of the first generation which remained focused on individual analysis, he did not graphically expand the original model of the system of collective activities. This led to the development of a third generation by Engestrom.

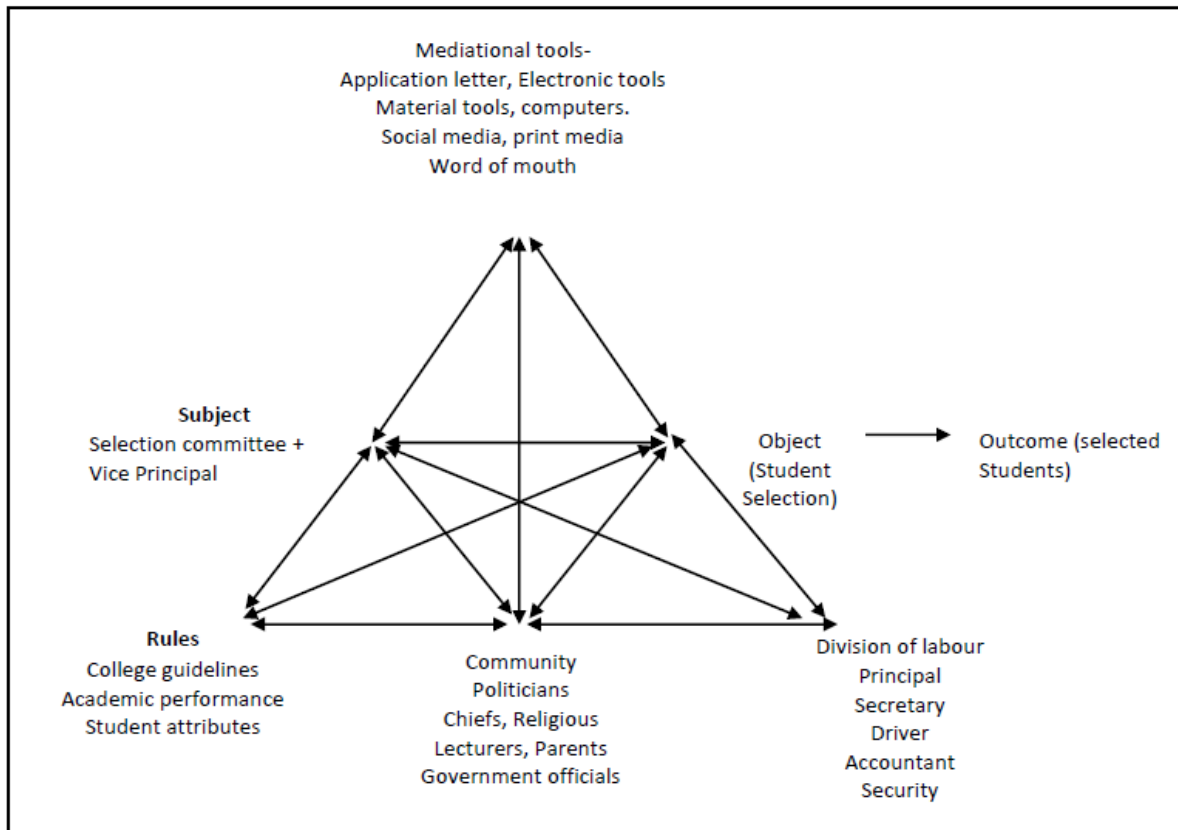
3.2.3 Third generation of Activity Theory

Engestrom (1987) extended Vygotsky's the original triangular representation of the activity in the first generation. Hence, Engestrom (1987; 1999) proposed to expand the Vygotskian triangle with additional elements (Hasan and Banna 2010). Addition of the three elements community, rules and division of labour enabled examination of the system of activity at macro level of the community (Hasan and Banna 2010) and called it an activity system (Engestrom 1993; 2004). Community is the social and cultural group with explicit rules or social norms that regulate and influence behaviour (Batiibwe 2019). In other words, community consists of participants who are assigned to make rules that guide subjects on how to operate as they collectively work together on the object to achieve the outcome. Rules are sets of conditions that help determine how and why individuals may act (Hashim and Jones 2007). According to Hasan and Banna 2010, rules mediate the relationship between subject and community and include conventions, regulations and social relations within the community. The rules guide the activities and behaviours of the subjects and community in the system. To complete the activity system, the relationship between the community and the object are mediated by the division of labour. The community in this study encompasses the responsible authority, parents, student teachers, the entire college etc expect the secretary to sort the application letters during the student selection activity according to religious background first before sorting according

to academic performance. This is because the secretary is allocated the duty by the community and so they should, according to the division of labour. The same applies to all other members of the community including subjects. This provides for the distribution of actions and operations among a community.

The third generation, which includes elements of the first generation according to Engeström (1993; 1999; 2004) consists of seven nodes / elements: subject, object, tools, outcome, community, rules and division of labour. (See Figure 3.3). In the context of this study, the student teacher selection activity system, the subjects enact the object, through both psychological (knowledge, language) and material (resources, computers) mediation tools as assigned to them by the community, acting within their division of labour following both implicit and explicit rules to achieve the outcome (students selected). This is supported by Astudillo and Martín-García 2020 who contend that the relevance of this third generation of Activity Theory is that it focuses on the interrelationships between the subject as an individual and his community. Mediational tools mediate between the subject and the object, facilitate or enable the subject to act on the object to ensure the achievement of the intended result. However, the tools may also restrict the enactment of the object and hinder the achievement of the intended outcome. At the same time, the rules mediate between the subject and the community ensuring that members of the community and subjects work within the confines of the stipulated regulations and according to the division of labour. The community is responsible for allocating duties and roles to members of the community according to the division of labour (based on qualification and training).

Figure 3.3: Third generation activity theory



Source: Adapted from Engestrom 2001

While Engestrom (2001) further introduced the dimension of boundary crossing with multiple activity systems sharing an object, this study adopted the initial third generation of activity theory composed of the seven nodes/elements: subject, object, tool, outcome, rules, community and division of labour as the issues of boundary crossing did not clearly play out in this study. I now explain each of the seven elements of the activity system and relate these elements to my study

Subject of the activity: Subjects are individuals or group of people who are engaged in an activity. The subject pursues a certain goal- the object such as student selection which leads to the outcome of selected students (Frambach et al. 2014). Trust (2017); Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008); Batiibwe (2019) concur that the subject is the individual or group involved in an activity. However, Trust (2017) further explains that as the subject pursues the object, their identities and knowledge are shaped and transformed through their interactions with the other elements in the activity system. In other words, subject gains experience and improve their performance as a result of the interaction with other elements. Hasan and Kazlauskas 2014 saw the subject as the doer. In this study, the subject comprised of a team of selection

committee members and Vice Principal who worked together with other members of the community to ensure that the outcome was achieved.

Object: It is the motivating influence behind subjects' participation in the activity. This is the target of the activity or the reason why the activity is there. The concept of the object provides insight into why people perform different actions (Trust 2017). It precedes and motivates activity. Kirk and Nilsen (2016) concur with Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) that the object is moulded or transformed by the participants in the activity system into an outcome or desired results. Additionally, Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) refer to object as the raw material or problem space at which the activity is directed. Subjects are motivated by the object. Foot (2014) calls the object the foci entity meaning that all activities and actions are directed towards it. Object plays a role of distinguishing an activity from other activities because it guides and leads the activity (Kim et al. 2011). In other words, what distinguishes one activity from another is the difference in their objects. In this study, student selection was what had to be done by the subjects to transform the object into the desired outcome (selected students).

Outcome: This represents the desired results from the transformation of objects, in this study the outcome was student teachers selected. But, Murphy and Rodriguez- Manzanares (2008) argue that the outcome can be desired or unexpected. Batiibwe (2019) refers to outcome as the desired product like having the students selected in the current study. The outcome is the consequences that the subject faces because of his/her actions driven by the object (Kirk and Nilsen 2016). Furthermore, these outcomes can encourage or hinder the subject 'participation in future activities.

Tools: In CHAT framework, terms mediational tools/mediation artefacts are used to describe tools. Tools can also be symbols, signs and conceptual understandings that serve as psychological tools. Physical or material tools include hammers computers etc and the psychological tools are mental models, knowledge and language. Tools mediate every human action and experience (Vygotsky 1978) and in this study, tools mediated between subject and object. Tools take part in the transformation of the object into an outcome. In other words, tools define the way the subject carries out an action. In the context of this study, mediational tools included psychological –knowledge word of mouth and mental models while materials tools were the application letters, computers, social media, print media, and interviews etc.

Rules: These are sets of collectively negotiated socio-cultural conventions (Batiibwe 2019). These conventions are explicitly stated or implicitly understood guidelines for acting, behaving and interacting within the community (Trust 2017). Furthermore, the rules provide lens for understanding how to become a full participant in a community (Jones 2014). Foot (2014) points out that rules are norms that regulate the subject's actions toward an object and relations with other participants in the activity system. Meanwhile, Batiibwe (2019) refers to rules as cultural expectations for behaviour and norms including procedures and regulations of interactions that were acceptable by subjects. In the current study, institutional guidelines, student attributes, academic performance and quality control formed some of the rules that guided student selection into the selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

Community: Community refers to a group of individuals with shared interest or culture that interact within an activity system. Kim, Schied and Kwon (2011), Kirk and Nilsen (2016) share a similar definition of community by referring community as group of people who collaborate over time in sharing the same object of an activity. However, Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) differ from the two definitions above as they refer to the group of people as participants of the activity system. It is the community members who have the responsibility to negotiate the division of labour and rules for participation within the community (Trust 2017). However, Foot (2014) prefer to use the term *community of significant others* referring to the same community and argues that it consists of people who share with the subject an interest in and involvement with the same object. In other words, the subject and the community collaborate and interact as they work towards the same object. In the context of the current study, the community included the politicians, the religious, chiefs, government officials, parents, students and lecturers. They shared the same object (student selection) because all stakeholders wanted the student selection activity to take place.

Division of labour: Division of labour relates to distribution of tasks. Engstrom (1987) points out that division of labour is about how members share the work in the activity system. However, Foot (2014) refers to division of labour as what is being done by whom toward the object. In other words, Foot relates this to the allocation of duties and roles to the members of the community and the subject. This element of the activity system, divides tasks according to qualification and training including both horizontal and vertical division of power, positions, access to resources and rewards (Foot 2014). An example of vertical division of power in this study was the Vice Principal who chaired the selection committee. In this study, positions of Principals, secretaries, accountants, drivers emerged from the distribution of tasks and duties.

In concurrence with Foot, Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) point out that the division of labour involves the distribution of tasks and roles among members of the community including division of power and status. Thus, in this study, each of the seven elements had to act according to the division of labour within the activity system to attain the outcome – students selected.

3.3 The principles of CHAT

Engestrom (2001) identified five principles or key assumptions central to CHAT.

3.3.1 Principle One: Collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system

This is reflected collaborative actions on the object which is taken as the prime unit of analysis. This means that all components of the activity system influence each other in complex interactions in order to achieve the outcome. The subject pursues a goal –object (student selection) which leads to the outcome (selected students). During the activity, the subject uses tools-mediating artefacts (application letters, interview, written tests, etc) to enact the goal. The subject interacts with the community and the surrounding context, the activity is governed by implicit and explicit rules. The community allocates roles and tasks, according to the division of labour, to those involved.

3.3.2 Principle Two: Multi-voicedness of the activity systems

An activity system involves a collective of interacting individuals and communities who express different interests, experiences and views. In this study, the involvement of subject (selection committee members and Vice Principals), community (politicians, chiefs, parents, government officials and the religious) and prospective student teachers meant diversity of perspectives/ point of views from different social backgrounds. These differences in opinion maybe sources of friction and tension leading to contradictions which may be a source of change and development. However, the success of an activity in the activity system depends on the commitment and effectiveness of each node. This also requires collaboration in the activity system.

3.3.3 Principle Three: Historicity

Activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time. Understanding the current form of the activity system requires and draws on knowledge from its past, for instance, how rules guiding student teacher selection were developed based on what was practiced previously. Further, citing Engeström, (2001) (Mukeredzi 2009; Marwan 2019) noted that the history of an activity system helps in understanding problems as well as the potentials of activities because parts of previous phases of activities stay often embedded in them as they develop. It seems as if this principle highlights another important issue in CHAT that activities have their own history as they and their elements are under continuous, uneven change and development (Mukeredzi 2009).

3.3.4 Principle Four: The central role of contradictions as sources of change and development

Contradictions are deviations from the established norms or practices. Relations between the subject and a newly introduced instrument (computer) into the system, may create friction and disorder. For example, the use of computers may require new skills from all the users including the subject and the community which may not be supported by all community, thus creating contradictions. However, such contradictions may lead to learning through reflection. These contradictions can occur within, or between the seven elements of the activity system.

3.3.5 Principle Five: The possibility of expansive transformations or expansive learning in activity systems

The principle of expansive learning comes from expansive theory. According to Mukeredzi (2009) expansive learning refers to the possibility of extensive learning and transformation in the activity system through re-conceptualization of the object and the motive of activity and embracing a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity. Contradictions may lead to expansive learning and transformation. However, it should be noted that some contradictions may not lead to any learning as these will simply be divergent views. Taking from the fourth principle, the contradictions emanating from a newly introduced mediation tool (computer) could lead to change and transformation of the activity system where the subjects and community may want to learn more about it (computer) and then start using it

in the activity system. This then brings change of views and development related to new ways of selecting student teachers into teacher training colleges. Contradictions are discussed in the next section.

3.4 Contradictions

Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) have used tension, contrast, conflict to describe contradictions. Yet, Kuutti (1996) described them as a misfit within elements. In this study, contradictions shall imply diversion from the established norms and practices (Mukeredzi 2009).

Contradictions are an important aspect as they assist in the overall transformation of the activity system (Venegas 2018). In other words, contradictions lead reflection and overall changes and development of the activity where such contradictions are identified, and reflected upon to find ways of doing things differently and the tensions resolved. Engestrom (2015) concurs by stating that contradictions are the principle motive for change and they lead to creation of new forms of activity as solutions emerge. For example, if online applications for new students were introduced in a college using the manual method, then, that could create conflict with the old method. But, if the change is appropriately handled and taken on board, new developments could emerge. Online applications could even prove to be efficient and fast. However, the disadvantages like unavailability of electricity in the remote areas could work against the innovation. Engestrom (2000) also contends that the identification of contradictions assists practitioners to focus their efforts on the root cause of the gap. Alternatively, that identification could also give rise to effective ways to mediate their effects and encourage creation of innovations to overcome them, which brings about development (Mukeredzi 2009).

In the next section, I discuss the four types of contradictions as propounded by Engestrom (1987).

3.4.1 Types of contradictions

Engestrom (1987) divided contradictions into four categories depending on their occurrence.

3.4.2 Primary contradictions

These are contradictions arising from within one node. For instance, in the context of this study, some subjects may disagree with the approach to student selection. Things like, introducing or

employing conflicting sets of guidelines like using A level and O level selection criteria at the same time may create problems.

3.4.3 Secondary contradictions

Secondary contradictions arise between nodes. For instance, when there is conflict between the subject and rules that is the subject ignores rules and select students who have not attended interviews.

3.4.4 Tertiary contradiction

Such contradictions play up when a more advanced activity system is introduced into the existing activity system. For example, introducing online applications midway the selection process may create conflict with old selection system.

3.4.5 Quaternary contradictions

This type of contradiction may arise between the central activity and its neighbour activity. In this study, the student selection activity system may be in conflict with the student selection activity system within the college for instance a college activity system dealing with registration or enrolment of selected student teachers.

3.5 Usefulness of CHAT in this study of the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe

Elsewhere in education, CHAT was used by Trust (2017) to examine teachers' knowledge seeking and sharing actions in the Edmond Math Subject Community, a popular professional development network. Then in the United States of America, CHAT was utilised to analyse structural contradictions existing in a variety of educational activities among a group of alienated adult students in Korea National Open University (Joo 2014). Further, Kim, Schied and Kwon (2011) also in the United States of America examined CHAT as an alternative approach to understanding learning in urban communities to overcome the challenges of existing adult learning theories. In addition, Mukeredzi (2009), used CHAT framework to understand the professional learning practices that professionally unqualified practising teachers engaged in, in rural secondary schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Lesotho, Maraka (2020) studied HIV/AIDS and Higher Education: A Cultural Historical Activity Theory Analysis of Three Institutions' Responses. In South Africa, Zulu (2017) studied how learning occurs, in two teacher learning communities; in KwaZulu Natal. In this study, I used

CHAT to understand the dynamics of pre-service teacher entry into selected teacher education institutions in Zimbabwe. CHAT therefore can be used to understand different phenomena in different contexts.

CHAT elements and principles discussed above, provided a picture of what was happening in the activities of student teacher selection process. The main strength of CHAT in this study was that it was used both as a methodological lens and theoretical framework to understand how pre-service teachers were selected into selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. Kim, Schied and Kwon (2011) adds that the flexible and diverse attributes of CHAT provide a useful and powerful theoretical framework to examine learning in communities in everyday lives without regard to situation. In this study, CHAT provided a powerful theoretical framework to examine student teacher selection in four selected colleges regardless of the nature of the college. Perhaps, the flexibility of CHAT attributes is what Mukeredzi (2009) refers to as the adaptability of CHAT to all sorts of different domains and levels. In other words, CHAT may suit any activity in any situation.

Kim, Schied and Kwon (2011) added that CHAT allows us to investigate the dynamics and diversity of adult learning within communities by considering socio-cultural contexts, including internal/external ideologies and power relations, surrounding activity systems. In this study, CHAT provided me with the opportunity to take into consideration the social and cultural context of the study including power structures like chiefs, government officials, political and religious structures etc.

According to Qureshi 2021, another strong attribute of CHAT relates to ability point to where conflicts and tensions lie as a basis for improved forms of activity. In this regard, Kim et al. 2011, add that the concept of contradiction overcomes an assumption that learning or activity always occurs in a positive way, a faulty assumption made by many educational researchers. In this study, the use of CHAT assisted in understanding that the activity system is practically driven by contradictions. In this regard, CHAT was a useful theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of pre-service teacher entry into teacher education and the inherent contradictions.

In addition, with regard to what was taking place in the selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe, from CHAT perspective, each college represented an activity system of student teacher selection. Thus, each college was viewed as distinct activity system, where the CHAT

framework was used to show the relationships between all human and non-human elements of the different colleges.

However, notwithstanding its attributes, CHAT has some weaknesses which are highlighted in the next section.

3.6 Limitations of CHAT

The main weakness of CHAT is that it tends to generalise without looking into the activity to see exactly how processes occur within collective engagement in the domains and levels (Mukeredzi 2009). For this study, CHAT did not facilitate looking inside the activity to show how and what happened in the various sections in the process of student selection. However, this study roped in a complementary framework – Funnel theory to guide in understanding such aspects in the dynamics of pre-service teacher entry into teacher education. Further, Mukeredzi (2009) argues that the CHAT model does not differentiate between different kinds of activities. In other words, any activity may be placed within this model. In this study, the Funnel theory enabled understanding stage by stage the activities that took place from the beginning to the end of the journey when the prospective student is enrolled in college.

Having discussed CHAT my main theory in this study, in the next section I focus on the complementary theory: The Funnel Theory.

3.7 The Enrolment Funnel theory

3.7.1 Historical development

Gupta (2016), Sharkey (2017) and Goldberg (2017) concur that the Funnel theoretical model originated from the marketing field. Its development is credited to the American advertising and sales pioneer Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898. It is generally a purchasing theory called by different names: the sales funnel, marketing funnel or customer funnel (Kotler and Keller 2012) which traces the journey of a product. From a marketing perspective, the marketer shows their advertisements to a broad array of their ideal potential customers. The marketer then nurtures those leads slowly over time through the funnel, reducing the number of potential customers at each stage of the funnel, until eventually those leads arrive at the bottom of the funnel.

According to Sharkey (2017) in 1924, William H. Townsend combined the Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) model with the funnel concept, and from where the first marketing funnel theory was born. The AIDA model consists of a series of sequential steps or stages initially believed to be those stages through which consumers move when they make a purchase (Goldberg 2017). From the AIDA model, the marketer concentrates on attracting the attention of many possible consumers first, through advertising and making consumers aware of the product on sale. Next, the marketer cultivates Interest of the consumer by demonstrating the advantages and benefits of the product. Then, the marketer needs to convince the consumer that there is need for him/her to make a decision to purchase the product. Finally, the marketer needs to convince the consumer to take action by buying the product.

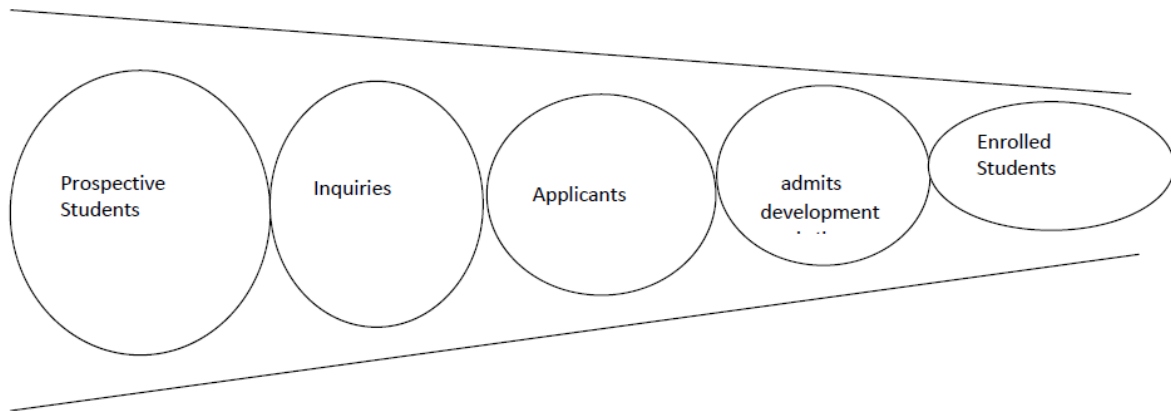
When, AIDA is applied to the Enrolment funnel, the first letter 'A' stands for AWARENESS. Through print and social media including word of mouth, as aspiring candidates become **aware** of the opportunities and services available at institutions. Those prospective students who are **interested** in particular colleges then, make inquiries showing the **desire** to join the college. Subsequently, prospective students take action by applying and enrolling.

The Funnel theory is sometimes referred to as the admissions funnel or recruitment funnel (Guzman 2014). The Enrolment funnel as a marketing concept defines a sequence of events a prospective student goes through before reaching an enrolment decision (Povejsil 2021). Further, the Enrolment funnel as a theoretical framework traces the journey taken by the prospective student teachers during the recruitment process from the initial enquiry and application to the final enrolment (Zinn and Johansson 2015). But, International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) Monitor (2015) suggest that the funnel is a way of imaging and managing the process of advancing students from a (relatively large) pool of prospective students through several key "conversions" such as enquiry, application, admission and enrolment.

The funnel concept is based upon the widely accepted view in marketing that the consumer moves toward a purchase through a staged process of events from initial awareness or discovery, to consideration and finally the purchase decision, and is also referred to as the customer journey (Kotler and Keller 2012). In this study, the funnel was a metaphorical process of advancing students from prospective students following a funnelling progression to identify the ideal student. In the funnel, the prospective student pool is often wider on the top and narrower at the bottom (Perna 2005). The five stages that prospective student teachers will

progress through include: 1. Prospective students 2. Inquiries. 3. Applicants. 4. Admitted students. 5. Enrolled students. These stages are illustrated in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Stages of the Funnel theory



Source Adapted from Frost (2015)

From the Enrolment funnel, prospective students progress through five distinct stages on their way to enrolling. These stages are discussed in the following section.

3.7.2 Stage One: Prospective Students or Suspects

Stage one begins with a large pool of prospective students. This is also known as the suspect stage where the set of aspiring students who have shown interest in going to college may not be aware of the target institution and its programme offerings (Monzon 2021). However, Miller (2020) provides a slightly different explanation when he argues that prospects can include people who have taken anonymous interactions with college websites and, social media platforms but, have not identified themselves or provided contact information. In this study, all post 'O' level students who were eligible to get into college would fall under this category.

3.7.3 Stage Two: Inquiries

The Inquiries stage according to Zinn and Johansson (2015) represents the step where the inquirers - the prospective students who have shown interest in Higher Education, decide to find more information. Miller (2020), Monzon (2021) concur with Zinn and Johansson 2015 that the inquiries stage represents a set of students who show interest in an institution by simply requesting information about educational opportunities available. In the context of this study, it represented those candidates who were interested in the teaching profession, who probably looked for advertisements on the press, searched for information from other sources, contacted

or visited the colleges to seek more detail. Further, such prospective students in this study would include those who look for recommendation letters or other support documents in preparation for applying.

3.7.4 Stage Three: Applicants

Subsequent to obtaining information, a decision to apply is made. Once a decision to apply has been made, the inquirer is now an applicant (Copeland 2009). However, Monzon (2021) argues that the applicant stage consists of students who have submitted their application letters and all other documentation for consideration for admission, but Miller (2020) argues that those called applicants should be those students who would have completed an application. This could be where applications are made online, prospective students are then deemed applicant after completing such application forms. But, in this study, an applicant was understood as a prospective student teacher who had submitted application letter including other requisite documentation, to be considered for placement.

3.7.5 Stage Four: Admitted Students

Following the application, the institutions engage in various selection processes which may include oral interviews, written tests or live presentations. Following this, communication is sent out to applicants conveying the outcome. Once one has been accepted into a study program, he or she becomes an admitted student (Zinn and Johansson 2015). While Monzon (2021) concurs with Zinn and Johansson (2015), Miller (2020), provides a slightly different explanation that at this stage, admission team has to evaluate each applicant and determine which prospective students will be admitted. If an applicant meets the requirements they are deemed a good fit, and are granted acceptance. In this study, it was that stage when one had received an acceptance letter from the institution, notifying them that their application was successful, that they were referred to as admitted students.

3.7.6 Stage Five: Enrolled Students

According to Copeland (2009), this final stage of the Enrolment funnel is when students commit themselves to study at higher education. Miller (2020) refers to this stage as the deposits stage and argues that a deposit is a strong indication that the admitted student intends

to enrol in your programme, but it is not a guarantee. Deposits are not guarantee because a student may change their mind and decide to enrol at another institution. At the time of this study, the deposits symbolized acceptance of the offer of a vacancy in Zimbabwe which served as guarantee for a place for the student and were non-refundable. This was also to ensure that accepted prospective students turn up as many would not want to lose the money paid. In contrast to all other authorities, Miller (2020) suggests that there is a sixth and even seventh stage- the matriculated and retention stages respectively. This study however, worked with the five stages explained above. The next section discusses the application of the Enrolment funnel to the current study.

3.8 Application of the Funnel theory to this study

The Enrolment funnel is a powerful tool for tracing the journey of a student through the various stages that are linked to admission and enrolment (Kotler and Keller 2012). It vividly demonstrates how thousands of applicants would be reduced to a few selected students by the narrowing funnel to the admitted students. CHAT cannot provide a vivid picture of how applicants are reduced during the recruitment process. In other words, CHAT was not able to trace the journey travelled by the applicants from the prospective stage to enrolment, which task was accomplished through Enrolment funnel theory. Hence, the two theories were complementary.

3.9 Critique of the Enrolment funnel

The Enrolment funnel is criticised for its more linear path than is true for many prospects (Monitor, ICEF 2015). In other words, it fails to consider prospective students who only appear in the later stages of the funnel like admission or the enrolled stages (Hadiyati 2016). In this study, such students were cautiously considered as coming from pressure points and acting on them constituted contradictions from the CHAT perspective. Furthermore, Ajiboye et.al (2020) lament that there is undue emphasis on loading the top of the funnel, the prospective students and inquiry stages rather than focus on the enrolment process. In other words, more effort has been placed on filling the top levels of the funnel instead of concentrating on the enrolment process. The theory is further criticised for presenting an ideal situation notwithstanding that some students stay longer at one stage than others and that not all enquiries reflect the same level of interest, or suitability for admission (Miller 2020). There are also those students who

emerge the “stealth applicants” to join the funnel at later stages due to political pressure/influence, but the funnel is silent about it (Noel-Levitz 2009; Frost 2015). Further to this, the funnel ignores the quality of students that must be enrolled (ICEF Monitor, 2015) and there is no mention of stage where students are evaluated or assessed for suitability for teacher training. Moreover, the Enrolment funnel cannot function as an analysis tools because Elias St Elmo Lewis (1898) never intended to create a marketing funnel but instead describing the elements of an effective advertising composition (Goldberg 2017). In other words, the Funnel only serves to describe the shape and processes or stages of the journey of getting into teacher training and not for analysis. However, all these pitfalls mentioned above were addressed through the use of CHAT.

3.10 Summary

This chapter discussed the history of CHAT, the different generations: first, second and third generation, the five principles, the application of CHAT, the concept and types of contradictions, and finished off with the weaknesses and how they were addressed in the study. Under the Enrolment funnel, historical development, the principles or Enrolment funnel stages, and the application of the theory were also discussed.

The history of CHAT was attributed to the three founding researchers Vygotsky (1978), Leontiev (1978) and Engestrom (1987). Vygotsky was responsible for the first simple triangular generation which emphasized subject-object relationship, mediated by tool. Vygotsky’s triangle focused on individual work in activity. Leontiev developed the second generation which called for both individual and collective action, the mediation by other human beings, and social relations. Engestrom expanded the second generation by adding rules, community and division of labour and called it an activity system to depict interaction among the subject, community and environment. This study drew on the third generation with the expanded elements that included rules, community and division of labour inclusive of the initial, subject, object, outcome and tools. Engestrom forwarded the principles underlining the activity system where the principles of multi-voicedness and contradictions to portray the tensions that occur in activity systems are part of the principles. The principal of contradictions was useful in this study as it gave pointers to tensions which played up in student selection. The major limitation of CHAT was lack of differentiation in the activities to be included.

With regards to the Enrolment funnel, history indicates that it originated from the marketing field and was developed by Lewis in 1898 (Frost 2016). The idea is based on a consumer-focused marketing model which illustrates the theoretical customer journey towards the purchase of a product or service. The funnel was then defined as a marketing model used to define a sequence of events that a prospective student goes through before reaching an enrolment decision (Povejsil 2021). Five stages of the Enrolment funnel: prospective students, inquiries, applicants, admits and enrolled were discussed in detail followed by a critique which included that more emphasis is placed on top level of the funnel rather than concentrate on the actual enrolment process. However, these shortcomings were addressed by the CHAT framework.

Having discussed the two theoretical frameworks adopted for this study, in the next chapter, the methodology that guided data generation is discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore student teacher selection into selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The last chapter discussed the two theoretical frameworks cultural historical activity (CHAT) and Funnel theory that were adopted to guide this study. The current chapter discusses the research design and methodology. Following this introduction, first, I discuss the philosophical orientations that guided the study: interpretive paradigm and its assumptions. Second, I discuss the case study research design, and qualitative research approach. Third, I discuss population, sampling and the process of accessing participants. Fourth, I discuss piloting of instruments, data generation and data analysis including the challenges faced. Finally, before tackling issues to do with the ethical considerations and limitations of the study, I discuss how rigour and trustworthiness were enhanced in my study under: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

The study revolved around the key research question: What are the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe?

To answer this key question, three research questions needed to be answered:

1. What mediation tools are used in student teacher selection into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe?
2. What rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?
3. How do stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies for teacher training?

4.2 Research paradigm

The word paradigm originated from the Greek word “paradeigm” which means pattern. Dieronitou (2014) and Shwand (1989) concur that paradigms are world views and beliefs about the nature of reality, of knowledge and values. In other words, world views or basic beliefs that guide action and provide a framework for the researcher to understand reality – the world. Meanwhile, Perera (2020) and Ostern et al. (2020) also concur that research paradigm is a set of common beliefs and agreements shared by scientists about how problems should be

understood and addressed. In other words, the ways of viewing reality, knowledge and values can be shared or common to a certain group of people or community that draw on a certain paradigm. However, Taylor and Medina (2013) explain that a paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that guides research and practice in a field. This suggests that research paradigm is a plan or frame of reference that guides research. In my study, this plan or frame of reference offered me the broad approach or direction which helped to me to identify research procedures including how to generate data, how to analyze it and how to interpret analyzed data. Scotland (2012) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2016) share similar views of a paradigm that it consists of four elements or assumptions: epistemological, ontological, axiological and methodological assumptions.

4.2.1 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology, comes from ‘episteme,’ a Greek term for knowledge, which refers to the theory of knowledge, or the philosophy of knowledge, “how we come to know” (Henning 2005:2). It is about the relationship between the knower (researcher) and the knowable (researched) (Mukeredzi 2009). The relationship of researcher to that which they are inquiring into, a view of how one acquires knowledge. Epistemological assumptions are therefore concerned with how knowledge is created, acquired and communicated. Crotty (2003:3) and Abdelhamid (2008:2) concur that epistemology is ‘a way of understanding and explaining how we come to know that which we know.’ Epistemological assumptions would therefore address such questions as, ‘how do we come to know, where does the knowledge come from, what is its nature, what constitutes it, whose is it, what of it can be studied, understood and represented? (Henning 2005; Mukeredzi 2009). In other words, epistemology refers to the distance or relationship between the researcher and the researched.

From the Positivist stance, knowledge is “out there,’ all what the researcher needs to do is to obtain it using rigid scientific methods to observe, measure and quantify, account for and represent it statistically. Thus, the researcher maintains some distance from the researched, there is some detached relationship. From the location of my research on the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education – in the interpretive framework, reality was a human creation based on experiences, perceptions, values and beliefs of the research participants, there was interaction with research participants in the process of knowledge / reality construction, the process of getting to know, the data generation process (Mukeredzi

2009). Thus, there was close researcher / researched relationship. The distance was minimized through interviews, focus group discussions and observation in the process of generation of data.

4.2.2 Ontological assumptions

The ontological assumptions deal with views on the nature of reality (Lindsay and Prabasch 2016). They specify **that** which has to be studied, or known on a phenomenon (Guba 1990). It is the **nature or essence of knowledge**, the principle of existence, of pure being (Mukeredzi 2009). Ontological assumptions influence the researcher's standpoint regarding reality or knowledge. In other words, whether one views reality aspects as a given, external, objectively real, or they view reality/knowledge as socially constructed, subjectively experienced (subjective experiences of the external world) and then expressed through language (Mukeredzi 2009). Ontological assumptions answer questions related to whether reality is external, given, objective and real, or whether it is experienced, socially constructed and subjective (Creswell, 1998). In other words, ontological assumptions enable the researcher to define their positionality regarding data generation or reality to be understood.

On the one hand, positivists would answer the ontological questions explaining that reality is external, objective, detached, and 'out there' in the world and awaiting experimentation, observation and acquisition. On the other hand, interpretivists view reality or knowledge as socially constructed and subjectively experienced as it emanates from human thought and is expressed through language (Mukeredzi 2009). Thus, ontological issues focus on the essence of knowledge or the phenomena under investigation and the interpretive ontology views reality/knowledge as personal and, therefore subjective and expressed through language - through thick descriptions. On the same vein, the ontological assumptions for this study therefore view knowledge as socially experienced, and constructed by actors (participants and researcher) in the research situation and therefore making it subjective. My study was conducted in a world of human beings –the community of students, lecturers and vice principals who had their own thoughts, interpretations and meanings. The study sought the experiences and inner thoughts of participants, and therefore, reality from perspective of this study was subjective as it differed from person to person (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Reality or knowledge was a social construction and a subjective experience as it emanated from human thought and was expressed through language.

4.2.3 Axiological assumptions

The word axiology is derived from two Greek roots ‘Áxios’ meaning worth or value, and ‘Logos’ logic or theory (Arora 2010). In this case, axiology means ‘the theory of values.’ Kryukov et al. (2021) concurs with Arora (2010) that axiology is the body of philosophical knowledge that deals with the issue of values. Tomar’s (2014) version of axiology is that it focuses on the questions about ‘what ought to be’ In other words, axiology deals with moral values. Such values guide decisions as to what is good, right and true (Tomar 2014). In that regard, axiology assumptions enabled me to conduct research with honesty and integrity with careful consideration of ethical procedures because of moral values which influenced me. The research participants had their own values which had to be respected. Therefore, axiology is concerned with moral and ethical values.

4.2.4 Methodological assumptions

Methodology is the theory of knowledge or more specifically theory of knowing, how we come to know in a practical sense, contrary to epistemology, which is about how we come to know philosophically (Mukeredzi 2009). Epistemology and methodology are interdependent, as Henning (2005) cited by Mukeredzi (2009:103) puts it, “intimately related.” Thus, one is the philosophy of getting to know while the other is the practice of getting to know, epistemology being the theory of knowing while methodology is the practice of knowing. Methodology in the context of my study referred to the specific methods and techniques: interviews, focus group discussion, and observation that I employed for data generation to enable understanding the phenomenon: the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education. Thus, methodology relates to how the researcher practically makes the choices of research paradigm, design, approach, methods and procedures adopted in the study to find answers to the key research question (Aliyu et al. 2015). Therefore, the methodological assumptions are the suppositions or conjectures related to how a researcher would carry out the study.

Having discussed the paradigmatic assumptions, next I discuss the interpretive paradigm adopted for this study.

4.2.5 The interpretive paradigm

Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) and Ryan (2018) concurred that there are three commonly known philosophical research orientations that guide research methods and analysis: positivist, interpretivist and critical theory. The positivist paradigm holds the view that reality is a single unitary world that can be accessed through scientific methods and there are no multiple interpretations (Selvan 2017). In other words, reality is objective. The positivist paradigm focuses at searching for the cause and effect relationships in measurable entities with the aim of providing explanations and make predictions based on measurable outcomes. Given the nature of my study which sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher selection into teacher education, this paradigm was not appropriate. The critical theory paradigm holds the view that reality, is composed of diversity of viewpoints (Dammak 2020). The paradigm focuses on liberation and emancipation of humans and aims to promote human rights and increase social justice (Dammak 2020). This is a social science research paradigm that focuses on power, and inequality to effect social change. This reflective, dialogic paradigm allows the researcher and the participants to question the 'natural' state and challenge the mechanisms for order maintenance (Mukeredzi 2009). My study was on pre-service teacher entry into teacher education programmes, as such the critical paradigm was inappropriate.

This study therefore adopted an interpretive paradigm. The interpretive, as Alvermann and Mallozzi (2010) point out, is an approach to studying social life with the assumption 'that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action. In other words, human experiences are inherent in their social life. This is given that the interpretive paradigm is based on the assumptions that social reality is shaped by human experience and social contexts and therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (Bhattacharjee 2010). In this study, participants' views/perceptions and actions on student teacher selection were influenced by the social contexts (cultural values and norms) the teachers' colleges. In other words, the way participants think, respond to questions, interpret data and act was influenced by the social environment. Given the social aspect of lived experiences, interpretive paradigm is a research model based on searching for meaning from multiple subjective views in the subjective data, and the various interpretations create deep and better understanding of the phenomenon being studied, this was the case in this study. In support of this argument, Dean (2018) concurs with Green (2020) by referring to interpretivist paradigm as a contextual reflexive approach, which centralizes human meaning-making and

knowledge claims. The interpretive paradigm was therefore, a suitable approach to my research as it helped to understand phenomena from the perspectives of the participants' subjective points of view.

In relation to ontology, the interpretivists believe that reality is multiple, subjective, relative and socially constructed unlike the single unitary world in the positivist paradigm (Prabash 2016). In my study, reality was viewed and interpreted from different perspectives of the various participants. Furthermore, Pham (2018) argued that interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology in which a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations. Thus, reality was the participants' social constructions and lived experiences of selection into teachers' colleges. It was thus based on the interpretations of the participants: students, lecturers and vice principals and therefore subjective. Next, I discuss the research design adopted for this study.

4.3 Research design

To generate subjective data, a case study research design was adopted.

4.3.1 Case study

Yin (2014) states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. The huge demand for teacher training vacancies at the time of this study made student selection a contemporary issue which I investigated in its natural contexts – the colleges where boundaries between selection and colleges were blurred. Merriam (1998) defines a case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit.” In my study, the phenomenon student selection process was bounded in educational institutions. Halinen and Tornroos (2005) argue that the case study offers an opportunity to study a phenomenon within its context to develop a deep comprehension of how it relates to its context. In this study, I did not take participants outside their set up to carry out the study, but rather did so in their usual natural settings in which student selection occurred. The study was carried out in four selected teachers' colleges, as such adopted multiple-site case study design.

4.3.2 Multiple-site case study

Baxter and Jack (2008) comment that in a multiple-site case study, examining cases enables understanding the similarities and differences between the cases. In this study, multiple-site case studies enabled to me make comparisons between and within the cases. Heale and Twycross (2018) argue that using a multiple-site case study allows for a more in-depth understanding of the cases as a unit, through comparison of similarities and differences of the individual cases. This enabled a nuanced picture of dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in this study. Levings (2014) further indicates that, given a choice, a two-case study is better than a one case study, as the analytic benefits are much greater. Yin (2003), Heale and Twycross (2018) also contend that evidence arising from multiple-case studies is often stronger and more-reliable than from single-case research. In other words, multiple-site case study yields more robust findings through replications and comparisons. However, Baxter and Jack (2008) concede that although, evidence created in the multiple-site case studies, is considered robust and reliable, they are extremely time consuming and expensive to conduct. This was the case in this study. Notwithstanding the prolonged fieldwork that I experienced in the current study, the four-case studies that I investigated generated similar and different results which would yielded stronger and more reliable findings than a single case study which is consistent with (Yin 2003).

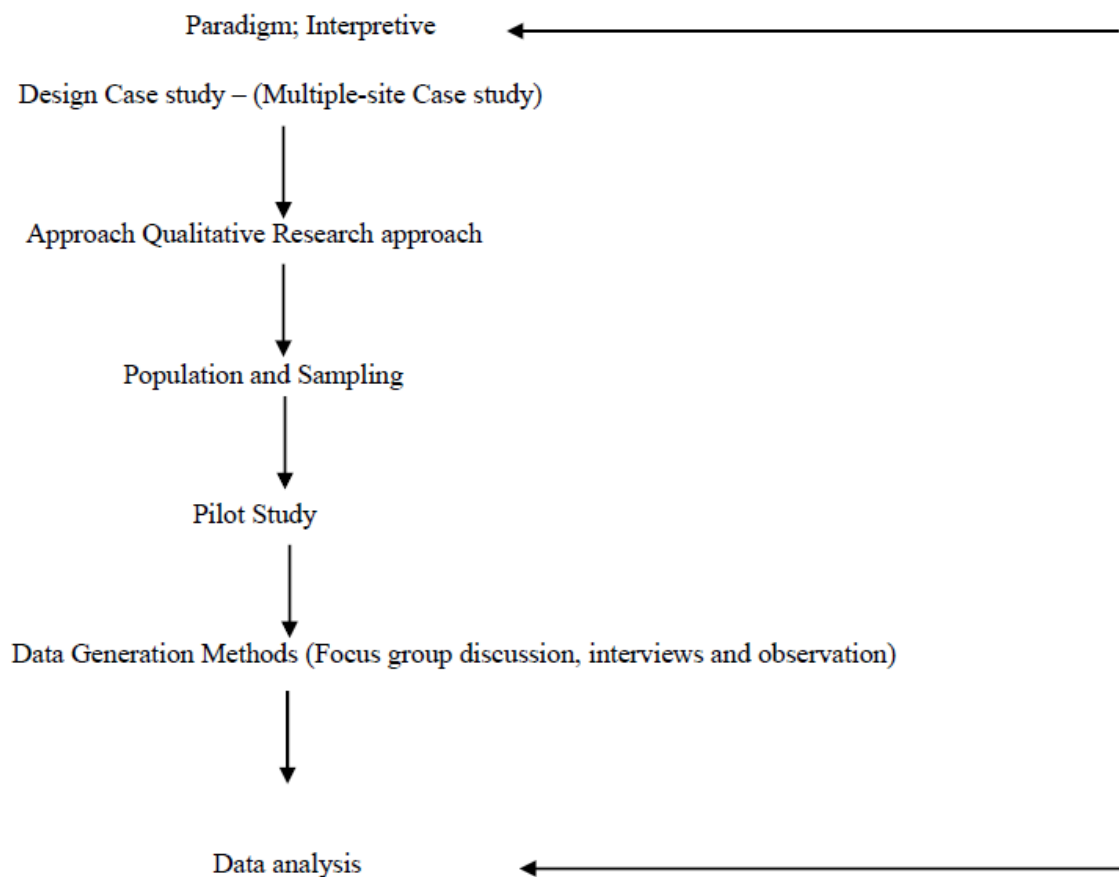
Heale and Twycross (2018) state that multiple-site case studies involve several cases to consider that are delivered from a number of locations. In my case, four cases were considered and they were in four teachers' colleges that were geographically located in different urban and rural locations. Stake (2006) recommends that when conducting multiple-case studies, 4-6 cases be studied because 2-3 cases do not show enough interactivity between the programmes to lead to qualitative generalizations. In my case, I studied four cases (four teachers' colleges). Krusenvik (2017) also stresses that case studies have unique strength in their ability to handle and combine multiple kinds of data collection methods such as documents, interviews, questionnaires, objects and observations. In my study, I generated qualitative, subjective data by employing focus group discussions, interviews and observation. Combining these methods

enhanced the credibility of my study as I was able to compare data from the different, complimentary data generation methods.

Case studies tend to have a wider web to catch information (Merriam 1994). Multiple-site case studies lead to a greater coverage and the greater the coverage, the greater the chance that the conclusions about the studies applied to more colleges with similar contexts (Pereira and Vallance 2006). In my study, from the four college sites there was wider coverage on student selection and enhanced high chances of applying or transferring the same outcomes or findings to other colleges.

Figure 4.1 provides a summary of the methodology adopted for the study followed by a discussion of qualitative approach.

Figure 4.1: Summary of methodology



Source: Researcher 2021

4.4 Qualitative research approach

My study adopted a qualitative research approach which aligned with interpretive paradigm and multiple-site case study design. The qualitative research approach was adopted based on its three strengths: conducted in natural settings; multiple sources of data and multi-modal quality; and flexibility. Teheran et al. (2015) define qualitative research as the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural setting. For my study, data was generated from participants in their institutions. Generating data from participants in their usual settings was vital to minimize anxiety that comes with placing participants in new environments. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2005) who argue that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpreting phenomena in terms of meaning people attach to them.

Qualitative research utilizes multiple sources of data. In this study, I generated data from student teachers, lecturers and vice principals through three methods: focus group discussions, face to face interviews, and observation. In this regard, Shelton (2015) points out that using multiple methodologies help to compare the data obtained and provides verification of findings in cases of agreement. I was able to compare data from lecturers against data from vice principals and students. For instance, at College D some lecturers highlighted that politicians influenced student selection but the vice principal from the same college argued that the politicians had no influence at all. In the same vein, Astin and Long (2014) concur that the qualitative research uses a range of methods of data collection. In my study, generating data from various data sources and through multiple strategies provided me the opportunity to triangulate the data sources and the data generation methods. Further, the value of the multi-modal approach lies in the complementary nature of data generated through multiple methods (Mukeredzi 2009). In this study, apart from enabling methods to filter one another as shortcomings of one were complemented by strengths of the other, multi-modal approach reduced method boundedness and minimized exclusive dependency on one and giving a more nuanced multifaceted picture of reality under exploration but not necessarily implying closeness to the truth (Mukeredzi 2009).

Flexibility which is the capacity to adapt (Powell and Golden 2000) is one characteristics of the qualitative research. In my case, the interview guide was flexible as it enabled me to probe and make follow-ups to answers provided. During focus group discussion, as moderator I decided which topic to pursue further in the discussion than others. So, the discussions were not rigidly decided on beforehand but flexible. Literature (Essay groom 2020) indicates that

qualitative study is mainly flexible because it accommodates the respondents' opinions. In my study, I welcomed opinions from various participants students, lecturers and vice principals.

Given the alignment of interpretive paradigm, as well as epistemological and ontological assumptions and the multiple-site case study design, with multiple subjective realities, from the perspectives of participants based on their lived experiences, a qualitative approach was appropriate for this study. Next, I discuss population.

4.5 Population

Explorable (2009) defines research population as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. In other words, population is a large pool of objects or individuals from where one can choose or select a few. My study population was made up of all student teachers, lecturers and Vice Principals in the four selected primary training teachers' colleges. In other words, participants were student teachers, lecturers or Vice Principals. In this study, the four colleges had approximately 2 000 student teachers, 316 lecturers and 4 Vice Principals from where I sampled out participants for the study.

4.5.1 Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting suitable participants or a representative part of a population for determining characteristics of the whole population (Mugo, 2002). I chose a sample to help me determine processes of student selection into teacher training colleges. Gentles et al. (2015) define sampling as the selection of specific data sources from which data are generated to address the research questions or objectives. In other words, sampling involves choosing a few participants to work with from the large pool to facilitate data generation. In my case, the student teachers, lecturers and Vice Principals formed the data sources from where I generated data to address the research questions. I selected eight students per college to make two groups for focus group discussion (4- 1st years and 4- third years). From the eight, I then selected five students from each college for face to face interviews. For the lecturers I selected two per college and their Vice Principals also for face to face interviews. I also selected two prospective students per college for observation. The summary of the study sample is reflected in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1: Study participants

Category of Participants	Number
Vice Principals	3
Lecturers	8
Student Teachers	32 (for focus group & individual interviews)
Prospective student teachers	8
Total participants	51

Source: Researcher 2022

In addition to saving resources, Varghese (2017) adds that sampling allows one to study a manageable number of subjects from the large group. This study employed convenience and purposive sampling designs.

4.5.2 Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling, according to Taherdoost (2016) refers to selecting participants because they are readily and easily available. I used convenient sampling to select four colleges, three which were in my province and therefore easily accessible. The fourth was far away in terms of distance, but easy to access by public transport. College A was a private institution under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Masvingo, College C was also private under the responsible authority of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, and Colleges B and D were government institutions. The variety of institutions was meant to enable comparisons in the student teacher selection processes. While Colleges B and D were government, they were located in different provinces, as such there were likely to be differences in the dynamics of student teacher entry into their colleges.

The first group of student participants were selected using convenience sampling to answer a short questionnaire which would enable identification of those students who had applied for teacher training vacancies at least three times without success. I thus, selected first and third year student teachers who were on the campuses at the time as second year student teachers were out on teaching practice. I also conveniently selected two prospective students per college for observation. These observation participants were easily accessible and readily available as they were on campuses for selection interviews. While Gentiles et al. (2015) refer to convenience sampling as the practice of doing what is fast and convenient, Varghese (2017) points out that convenience sampling means selecting sample units in a just Hit and Miss fashion. In my case, easy accessibility and availability were fast and convenient.

I conveniently sampled out 15 first year and 15 third year (30) students per college to respond to a short questionnaire only. The purpose of the questionnaire was solely to enable purposive sampling of actual research participants who had attended selection interviews at least twice. I chose to study first year student teachers because they were fresh from selection interviews and would have vivid memories of their experiences. Third year student teachers, due to their maturity and experiences in college, I believed, would be open to share experiences and views on student selection. My focus in this study was to explore student teachers who had unsuccessfully attended selection interviews at least twice before getting a vacancy. So, the purpose of the questionnaire was to identify those student teachers who had attended selection interviews two or more times before being admitted.

So, on meeting students, following a detailed explanation of the study, I requested for volunteers: 15 first year (7 men, 8 women) 15 third year (8 men and 7 women) to whom I would distribute questionnaires. Before the administering the questionnaire, I issued the Letter of Information and Consent (See Appendix 3) for them to sign. It was from the group of 30 students per college that I purposively sampled out study participants.

4.5.3 Purposive sampling

From the conveniently sampled student participants who responded to the short questionnaire, purposive sampling was used to select eight participants per college. This group of eight would attend focus group discussions and subsequently I would sample from this group, for face to face interviews. Hence, 32 students formed the sample of the study from the four teacher training colleges. Yin (2011) defined purposive sampling as selection of participants to be used in a study based on their possession of anticipated rich and relevant data to answer research questions. In my study, participants selected were knowledgeable of student selection processes based on their experiences. Gentiles et al. (2015) and Yin (2011) concur that purposive sampling enables selecting information-rich participants for in-depth study. Student teachers had attended at least two unsuccessful selection interviews before getting admitted and so had information on the subject. The lecturers and Vice Principals by virtue of their being in the selection committees in their colleges were involved in the selection processes, therefore knowledgeable.

Purposive sampling was accomplished in five steps based on the short questionnaire: First, I selected those who had unsuccessfully attended six selection interviews, I got one student.

Second, I looked for those who had attended five selection interviews and I got two. Third, I selected those students who attended four selection interviews and I got two. Then, fourth I looked for those with three unsuccessful selection interviews, I got one and finally, I looked for those with two selection interviews, I got two. The numbers of what I got for the different sittings in the colleges varied slightly. I however, got a total of eight participants per college. I then put them together and then separated them by gender, there were three men and five women in each of the first two colleges and in the other two colleges there were three women and five men in each thus producing two focus groups of four members per college. This is the procedure that I followed in all colleges in sampling for focus group discussions and also for pilot participants.

Following sampling student teachers, I purposively selected lecturers who were members of the selection committees. I selected those who had at least three years (3) experience in the college selection committee. A purposive sample of eight lecturers was selected, two per college. There were 4 Vice Principals, in the selected colleges. I sampled three as the fourth was me, the researcher. The study participants are reflected in Table 4.1 above.

4.5.4 Research setting

To understand any phenomenon, Atieno (2009), contends that the best way is to understand its context. This section describes the setting in which the study was conducted. The description enables an appreciation of the context from where the data were generated, analysed, explained and presented.

In Zimbabwe, at the time of this study, teacher education was located in 13 universities and 17 teacher training colleges scattered around the country. Of the 17 teacher training colleges, 13 trained primary school teachers, while three produced secondary school teachers, and the fourth developed secondary technical teachers. Generally, the duration of the course was three years for O level graduates following the 2-5-2 model explained in Chapter One. Those with A level qualification were placed on special two-year programme and were in secondary training colleges. All training colleges were associates of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education (UZ DTE). This meant that the UZDTE ensured the development and maintenance of appropriate academic and professional standards by monitoring, supervising and assessing the quality of programmes offered in the colleges (Mavhuto 2015). It was from

the pool of 13 primary teachers' training colleges and the four secondary teachers' colleges that the four primary colleges used in this study were sampled.

The four colleges sampled for this study were all primary teacher training colleges. Two were located in urban settings but in different cities, and both government sponsored. As government sponsored they were well provided for in terms of both infrastructure, and material resources including technological equipment. The other two teacher training colleges were Church-run under the Catholic and Reformed Churches respectively. These two were located in rural settings governed by Church responsible authorities and also under the local chiefs. These two were the oldest teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. Their infrastructure and provisions were generally limited. While student teachers in the two government colleges did not pay training fees, in these two private colleges, trainees paid fees. Notwithstanding, the pressure to get into teacher training was similar, as all colleges experienced huge numbers of applicants as highlighted in Chapter One.

Having provided a picture of the research setting, in the next section, I discuss how I accessed participants.

4.5.5 Accessing participants

Arriving at each college, I called onto the Principal's office and produced my documents: Ethical Clearance (See Appendix 1), Gate Keeper permission from the Ministry of Higher Education (See Appendix 2), Information Letter and Consent Form (See Appendix 3). After explaining my study, I was directed to the Vice Principal who took me to a lecture hall to meet first year students who were on a free period. I explained the purpose of my study in great detail. After that, I administered questionnaires as explained above. After collecting completed questionnaires, with codes that I had assigned following student list that I had been given, I was then led to a theatre where I met 3rd year students and followed similar steps as in 1st year group. I followed the same steps in all colleges for accessing both study and pilot participants.

4.5.6 Pilot Study

Before conducting this study, I carried out a pilot study to test the research instruments. Hassan et al. (2008) indicate that a pilot study is a small study to test research protocol, data collection

instruments, sample recruitment strategies and other research techniques in preparation of a larger study. Arain et al. (2010) refer to a pilot study as a small feasibility study designed to test various aspects of the methods planned for a larger more rigorous investigation. In my study, this enabled testing the instruments: questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview questions on a small scale before fully implementing these methods in the actual study. All instruments were tested on out-going final year students who had been on Teaching Practice for the year and had only come to college to write their final examinations at College A. While I worked as Vice Principal, these pilot students were not longer part of the group of students as they had finished both courses and practicum and would not have any reason to fear or give answers that were not genuine. They would also not be part of the study.

From the pilot study, I gained experience and confidence in asking questions and probing on answers. Caitz (2009) adds that piloting is trying out all research techniques and methods, which the researcher has in mind to see how well they will work in practice. Before each session at College A, for piloting, individual interviews and focus group discussions I always explained to students and lecturers that while I was the college Vice Principal, my interaction with them was solely for purposes of my doctoral study and they would not be prejudiced in any way, as such I requested that they be open and honest. I always made this very clear before each data generation session at this college to allay student teacher's and lecturers' fears. In addition, as Vice Principal, I did not have any direct day to day interaction with student teachers for them to feel threatened. For the lecturers, while I interacted with them regularly, their having gone through at least a Masters' Degree, they understood research and I believed they would be open and honest.

From this pilot, I found that the focus group discussion schedule had some questions which required the same answers and so I had to modify them.

4.6 Data generation

In this study, qualitative data were generated through focus group discussion and individual face to face interviews with student teachers, individual face to face interviews with selection committee members and Vice Principals. These were complemented by observations of selection interview sessions of some prospective students. Cohen et al. (2011) and Creswell (2009) concur that qualitative orientations rely on life methods like interviews, focus group discussions and observation which enable dialogue between the researcher and participants. I

started with focus group discussions with student teachers as this would enable purposive sampling of participants for individual interviews. The itinerary that I followed for data generation is reflected in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Itinerary for data generation in the 4 Colleges

Date	Institution	Activity
19/03/2018	College A	Observation of selection interviews
22/03/2018	College A	Piloting the study
29/03/2018	College A	Questionnaires & Focus group discussion (1 st and 3 rd year)
30/03/2018	College C	Observation of selection interviews
10/07/2018	College A	Interview with lecturers
12/07/2018	College A	Interview with students (1 st year)
13/07/2018	College B	Interview with lecturers
16/07/2018	College A	Interview with students (3 rd year)
18/07/2018	College A	Member checking 2 lecturers
10/09/2018	College C	Questionnaires & Focus group discussion (3 rd year)
20/09/2018	College C	Interview with Vice Principal & students (3 rd year)
26/09/2018	College C	Interview with lecturers
27/09/2018	College C	Questionnaires & Focus group discussion (1 st year)
28/09/2018	College C	Interview with students (1 st year)
29/09/2018	College C	Member checking 2 students
03/10/2018	College D	Interview with Vice Principal & lecturers
05/10/2018	College D	Member checking Vice Principal
10/10/2018	College B	Interview with Vice Principal
16/10/2018	College D	Questionnaires & Focus group discussion (1 st and 3 rd year)
17/10/2018	College D	Interview with students (3 rd year)
18/10/2018	College D	Interview with students (1 st year)
19/10/2018	College D	Member checking 2 students
22/10/2018	College B	Questionnaires & Focus group discussion (1 st and 3 rd year)
01/11/2018	College B	Interview with students (1 st year)
05/11/2018	College D	Observation of selection interviews
07/11/2018	College B	Interview with students (3 rd year)
08/11/2018	College B	Observation of selection interviews
09/11/2018	College B	Member checking 2 lecturers

Source: Researcher 2021

Data generation commenced in March 2018 and was completed in November 2018. From the Itinerary above, Colleges A and C mounted selection interviews in March 2018, as their new students registered in May. That meant I had to observe the live selection interviews during that period. However, Colleges B and D which enrolled students in January, conducted their selection interviews in November. Consequently, I had to conduct observations in these colleges during that period.

Interviews for the Vice Principal and third year students at College C were conducted on the same day. Availability of participants determined the day and time for meetings. In College C, focus group discussions were held over two days due to students' unavailability, but in the other three colleges the focus group discussions were held in one day. However, at College D which was about 200 kilometres from my home town, I had to stay 2 nights to ensure to the completion of data generation and member checking of focus group transcripts. Lack of activities between April and May, as well as between August and early September were due to college vacation.

4.6.1 Focus group discussion

Nyumba et al. (2018) and Baral, Uprety and Lamichane (2016) concur that focus group discussion is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from their specific personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes through a moderate interaction. In my study, I brought student teachers together to discuss student teacher selection into teacher education programme. However, Campbell (2008) refers to a focus group discussion as a planned, facilitated discussion among a small group of stakeholders designed to obtain perceptive views in a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. In other words, the focus group discussions should be pre-arranged and conducted in a venue where participants express themselves freely. In the colleges, focus group discussions were held in secluded rooms that had minimum interruption. Each focus group discussion meeting lasted about two hours and was audio-recorded to ensure accuracy of data captured.

The focus group discussion was guided by a discussion schedule (See Appendix 4) to ensure that the discussion remained focused on the study and to ensure generation of adequate in-depth data. During the discussions to keep participants talking and focused, I nodded my head to show that I was moving with them and also made verbal sounds like "Mmmm" throughout

and would be able to repeat what they said word for word like “what you are saying is...” In addition, I also kept mentioning students by the codes that I had allocated for entering on the questionnaire which they maintained for the discussion and even interviews. I also probed and followed up on questions, building on what they had said. I started with simple questions and then progressively moved to more difficult questions. The questions in focus group discussion generally focused on eliciting data on feelings and experiences about the selection process. Examples of some of the questions were; please tell me about your interview experiences? How would you describe the selection process? How were documents used?

Focus group discussion was vital for generating more diverse perspectives on student selection than an individual interview would do (Gundumogula 2020). As each participant expressed her/his opinions, other participants extended, added or even disputed. These interactions resulted in the expansion of ideas or contradiction of views which then enriched the data generated. Furthermore, focus group discussion can also encourage participation from people who are reluctant to be interviewed on their own or who feel they have nothing to offer from hearing and reflecting on peer contributions (Gundumogula 2020). In my case, student teachers who lacked confidence got an opportunity to open up and share their views in the focus group discussion. Miller (2020) adds that focus group discussion is a cost-effective way to get information. In this study, less time was spent interviewing two groups than individually interviewing each of them.

Each focus group discussion had four participants, on average two females and two males per group and two groups per college, one for first-year and the other for third year students. Separation was deliberate to enable first year students to open up without fear of senior students. With reference to group size, Miller 2020, Van Eeuwijk and Angehrn 2016 suggest that the typical size of a focus group discussion is six to twelve participants while Gundumogula 2020 suggests eight to twelve participants. However, Cleary, Horsfall and Hayter (2014), contend that the use of three to five participants in focus group discussions is well documented as it allows adequate time for each member to share their views.

In my study, there were moments when some outspoken members tended to be biased, dominating and manipulating other participants. This was also noted by Temkin (2017) who argues that focus group discussion can be very difficult to steer and control. However, I maintained a neutral attitude, providing equal opportunity to every student to share their views. I also directed questions to particular group members and thereafter would ask others to come in to prevent domination by extroverted participants. For those introverted students who

remained quiet and just wanted to agree, in directing questions at them, I looked at them straight in the eye to make them respond. Thus, every participant was afforded an opportunity to contribute.

At the end of the focus group discussions, I had to sample five participants to make 20 across the four colleges, whom I had to interview as highlighted in the sampling section above. I explained to the participants that I needed to select five from college to participate in individual face-to-face interviews. I purposively selected the student teachers consulting my notes and the codes used as pseudonyms in the focus group meeting. The inclusion/exclusion criteria for selecting the 20 participants was determined by their openness and articulation of views, how they contributed in the focus group discussion, their readiness to respond as well as the richness of their responses during discussion. After selecting, we then discussed and set up appointments for individual interviews. Table 4.3 below shows data generation table, following which I discuss data generation through interviews.

Table 4.3: Data generation table

INSTITUTION	QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENTS)	OBSERVATION	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (STUDENTS)	INTERVIEWS (2 – first year 3– third year)	Interviews (LECTURERS)	(VICE PRINCIPALS)
COLLEGE A	30	2	2 groups (8)	5	2	0
COLLEGE B	30	2	2 groups (8)	5	2	1
COLLEGE C	30	2	2 groups (8)	5	2	1
COLLEGE D	30	2	2 groups (8)	5	2	1
TOTAL	120	8	8 groups (32)	20	8	3

Source: Researcher 2021.

4.6.2 Individual face-to-face interviews

The interview technique was chosen to consolidate focus group discussion as some participants may not be comfortable talking openly in a group (Easwaramworthy and Zarinpoush 2006). As student teacher selection and admission topics are often associated with bribes and corrupt tendencies such as paying for places, some participants may have withheld data during focus

group discussions which had to be followed up in individual interviews. Furthermore, Gill et al. (2008) believe that interviews provide “deeper” understanding of the social phenomena – in my case student teacher selection and admission. Interviews offered me an opportunity to get into depth with the phenomenon to generate data that would address research questions regarding the processes of student teacher selection.

In addition, the interviews enabled me to distinguish individual opinions (about student teacher selection and admission) from the group opinions (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The group opinions could have been the opinions of the most outspoken or dominating participants. Further, interviewing as a data generation technique enables participants (student teachers, Vice Principals and lecturers) to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings about the topic (Alshenqeeti, 2014) in this case about student teacher selection. Interviews like in the focus group discussion, enabled clarification of questions, correcting any misunderstandings, offering prompts, probing responses and following up on ideas (Fox et al. 1998). The opportunity to probe responses and follow up on ideas, practicing good listening: keeping quiet when participants were talking, looking at them, nodding my head and making verbal sounds “Mmmm hmm” to show that I was closely moving and following the discussion, sometimes repeating what they said word-for-word, kept them talking and helped create richer more complete data. Mukeredzi (2016) says such interview practices enable creation of an atmosphere conducive for participant engagement with the process and with the researcher.

Interviews took approximately one hour and were guided by an interview schedule (See Appendix 5) with semi-structured questions which helped me to keep the discussion focused on generating relevant data to answer research questions. Literature surveyed (Moser and Korstjens 2018) assert that pre-planned semi-structured interview guide / help researchers to be in control and give direction to the interview, while the participants are in control of their answers. The guide therefore was pivotal in ensuring that the discussion remained within the parameters of the study.

While I found interviews an effective data generation instrument in this study, Kumar (2011:150) argues that “interviews are time-consuming and expensive to administer.” This is what I found in the study, my field work in particular interviews, were time consuming and draining. However, I planned thoroughly, pre-played my questions particularly for the first college and followed the schedule strictly, asking the same question following the same sequence except where I had to probe and follow up on questions. The interview sought to

generate data on the application processes, invitation for selection interviews, preparation for interviews, attendance of interviews, documents required for interviews, and recommendations to enhance the selection process. Some of the questions that I asked were; tell me how you heard about teaching vacancies. What did you do about it? How many interviews did you attend before you got a place? Tell me about these interviews.

Focus group discussion and interviews were complemented by observations of live selection interviews of prospective students in the colleges.

4.6.3 Observations of selection interviews

In Zimbabwe, colleges generally recruited and selected student teachers once per year; either in January or in May. As alluded to above, Colleges A and C recruited in May and Colleges B and D recruited in January each year. However, this difference in recruiting periods enabled me to visit colleges at different times to carry out selection interview observations.

30-minutes long observations were carried out during selection interviews of prospective student teachers in each college. I conducted observations as a non-participant observer. Literature (Choudhury 2018) defines non-participant observation as when the observer observes the group passively from a distance without participating in the group activities. The observer does not try to influence the group in anyway. From the onset, at College A, I explained to the selection committee members that the observation exercise had nothing to do with my responsibilities as the Vice Principal at this college. I also explained to these members that the observation exercise was only an activity for my doctoral studies and I would not interfere in the selection process.

Cowie (2008) defines observation as conscious noticing and detailed examination of participants' behaviour in a naturalistic setting. Thus, in this study I observed two prospective students from each college, taking note of and closely looking at participants' and selection committee members' behaviour in their usual environment. Similarly, Daniel (2013) refers to observation as a way to gather data by watching people, events or noticing physical characteristics in their natural setting.

The aim of observing selection interviews was to understand the mediational tools used and rules that guided student selection in colleges. Observation data generation technique was chosen in this study to compliment the focus group discussion and the interview methods. In

support of this argument, Young (2018) maintains that observation must be supplemented by other methods of study. In the current study, the observation method enabled me to triangulate the methods and compare results from these methods thus, enhancing the trustworthiness of my findings. Besides offering the opportunity to triangulate data and comparing results, observation provided me with direct, first hand and primary data. Literature (Bhasin 2020 and Kumara 2020) indicates that generating data through the eye is probably the most trustworthy technique of data collection in social research. In my case, I was able to record events as they occurred. In addition, the observation method provided more accurate data than the focus group discussion and interviews and the data were more reliable than data generated by the other two methods. However, Kumara (2020) indicates that personal bias of the observer may create difficulty for making valid generalization in observation.

Drawing on the observation checklist (See Appendix 6) during the 30-minute student selection interview, I noted the mediational tools that were being used such as O level certificates, recommendation letters application letters etc. I was also looking out for how the tools were used. Apart from the tools, I was also looking out for rules that guided student selection and looked at whether attributes like dress or teaching experience were considered during the selection process. The observation schedule assisted me to keep focused. In total, I made eight observations in the four teachers' colleges. In the next section, I describe member checking.

4.6.4 Member checking

After each focus group discussion, I transcribed data in the evenings while things were still fresh in my mind. This was vital as it enabled taking transcriptions back to participants during individual interviews for member checking. Member checking, also known as participant validation is a technique for exploring the credibility of results (Birt et al. 2016). In this study, member checking was conducted before data analysis to ensure that original participants' responses were accurately captured. Two students from College C and two from College D did member checking of focus group transcripts after the individual interview sessions. For the Vice Principal I e-mailed the Vice Principal of College D and attached the transcribed interview for member checking and asked him to add or subtract. He confirmed the data, but pointed out some language errors. From the lecturers, at College A and College B member checking was done by two selection committee members at each college.

In each case I gave the participants copies of the transcribed focus group discussions or interviews and I asked them to read, give comments, make additions, subtractions or correct any misrepresentations. Candela (2019) contends that member checking provides a way for the researcher to ensure an accurate portrayal of participant voices by allowing participants the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretations of data, thus adding credibility to the qualitative study. However, Mero-Jaffe (2011), argues that sending finished transcripts to interviewees for approval sometimes increases their embarrassment at the way that their statements appear in text.

Member checking was done by only seven participants. This was informed by Yin (2014) and Candela (2019) who view member checking as a process in which the researcher asks one or some of the participants in a study to check the accuracy of the transcriptions. As such, I felt that the member checking done by these seven participants was adequate. Further, given that participants were satisfied that I had captured their responses accurately, and in some cases, only expanded their responses, there appeared to be no pressing need to seek out input from all the participants.

4.6.5 Challenges faced in data generation

Two challenges were outstanding during data generation namely, accessing participants at one college, and refusal of some participants to be audio-taped.

At College C, it was a challenge to access participants: student teachers, lecturers and the Vice Principal for focus group discussions and interviews despite having been authorized to carry out observations of prospective students. The Principal did not respond to my letter requesting for appointments and authority to carry out the remaining data generation processes in the institution. Literature (Mukeredzi 2012) indicates that researchers must not only obtain consent and support of the original line managers, but also the support of other stakeholders who may be contextually closely connected to the field in which the researcher wants to do the fieldwork. When such stakeholders resent research activities or researcher presence, they may find ways of sabotaging the entire research process and its activities, Mukeredzi said. In this case, I struggled to get that go ahead from the line manager. Having failed to get a response, I then visited the institution to confirm the appointment dates that I had requested in my letter, only to be told that the response to my application for consent would be send at a later date. That was frustrating as this delayed me for more than two weeks. I waited, but no response came.

Eventually, I requested my college principal to speak to his counterpart, and he was given new appointment dates.

I then went for the data generation visit where I intended to administer questionnaires and conduct focus group discussions with first and third-year students. However, I only managed to engage third-year students because access to first-year students was denied as they were said to be attending orientation programme. This again frustrated me as I then needed to go back on another day for this first-year group. On the following visit (2nd visit) the Vice Principal who had given me an appointment for an interview, turned me away citing an urgent disciplinary case that was to be dealt with. It was only through the intervention of one Head of Department who pleaded with him that he (Vice Principal) then accepted to be interviewed. After interviewing the Vice Principal, I met third-year students for individual interviews. However, I still needed to go back to this college to meet first-year students. I had to change my itinerary, to meet the new date that I had been given and eventually managed to meet them and generate data. These changes and periods of waiting, were not only frustrating, but they pulled my progress back.

The second challenge related to College D. At this college, two Selection Committee Members refused to be audio-taped. I accepted their decision having failed to persuade them, and then interviewed them writing down all the answers. This certainly slowed down the interview process and dealt a big blow to my speed.

4.7 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non-textual materials that the researcher accumulates to increase understanding of the phenomenon. The process predominantly involves coding, categorizing the data and clustering categories into themes (Wong 2008). In this study, I prepared and organized my audio-tapes from the focus group discussion, and interviews, as well as observation notes for verbatim transcriptions.

To analyse data, I employed manual open coding approach. Borgatti (2015) defines open coding as data analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomenon found in the text. Open coding is a multi-stage process which is often achieved in four to eight interrelated steps that involve transcription, organization, familiarization and

coding, clustering categories, developing themes, hermeneutic cycle and contextualization of findings into a narrative. From the prolonged fieldwork, I had generated large amounts of data and the first step that I engaged in was transcribing.

4.7.1 Step one: Transcribing

To transcribe refers to putting recordings (audio) of focus group discussions and interviews into written form. Literature (McMullin 2021) refers to transcription as the transformation of recorded audio (usually spoken words) into a written form that can be used to analyse a particular phenomenon or event. I transcribed my data from audio recordings to typed prose and typed out notes from the selection interview observations. The transcribing exercise was extremely tiring, time consuming and required patience and persistence but it helped me to understand my data.

In support to my experience, McMillan (2021) contends that transcription is a notoriously time-consuming and often tedious task which can take over eight hours to transcribe one hour of audio—depending on typing speed. In this study, I played and replayed the recorded tapes several times before transcribing. This was done to ensure that all data was accurately captured. Literature (Davidson 2019) indicates that transcriptions lay all the qualitative data out on the table—making it easier for researchers to identify patterns and spot anomalies. In my case, I was able to identify the relevant and most important data that was related to each my research questions.

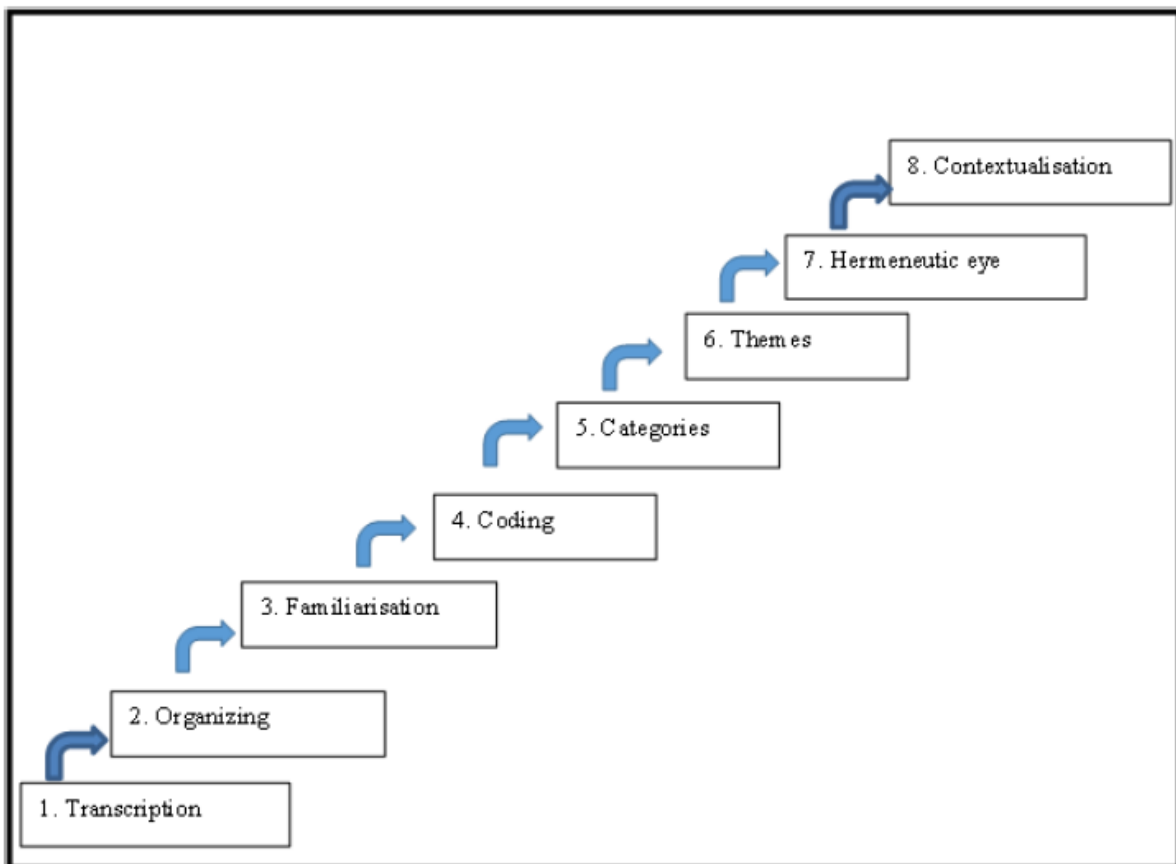
I transcribed the audio-recordings myself in order to be personally involved and immersed in my data; to familiarize myself with it and understand the patterns emerging before the actual data analysis. This also ensured participants' privacy. This is supported by Skukauskaite (2014:770) who argues that when researchers passed off the transcription of audio recordings as a “chore to be done by others, they missed out on the kinds of understandings that developed as tapes [audio files] are transcribed, and as well, they lose control over some of the transcription decisions made”. Following transcribing, I had to sort and organize the data.

4.7.2 Step two: Sorting and organizing data

Once the data was fully transcribed, it became necessary to sort it out and organize the data for analysis. Literature (Lacey and Luff 2009) points out that after transcription, it is necessary to

organize data into retrievable sections. Sorting and organization of data was necessary because that allowed me to go through each question, select data and arrange it according to particular research questions. Literature (Lester et al 2020) indicates that the sorting, preparing and organizing involved gathering all the audio- or video-recorded interview transcribed files into one location. I personally created retrievable files for transcribed interviews, focus group discussion and observational notes. In support of this action, Flick (2013) and Lacey and Luff 2009 concur that after transcription there is need to organize one’s data into easily retrievable sections. Generated data was organized according to research questions and I gave numbers and dates to the files for easy identification. Lacey and Luff (2009) point out that all data organized should include a date, some indication of context, and anonymised identifier that will enable the researcher to identify the source. Once transcribed and organized, I took time to familiarize myself with the data.

Figure 4.2: Data analysis stages (1-8)



Source: Researcher 2021

4.7.3 Step three: Familiarization

Ruona (2005) states that this is immersion into data and Braun and Clarke (2006) concur that familiarization process is common to all forms of qualitative analysis. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that in the process, researchers must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with their data. In my case, to familiarize with the data, I read and re-read the transcripts many times to get a sense of what the data were saying. Bernard (1994:365) refers to this stage as “Getting into the world of participants.” In my case, I put myself into the participants’ position to get to understand their views and perceptions on student selection. I kept listening to the audio recordings many times and read and re-read the transcriptions to understand what the participants were saying. As I was familiarizing with data, I was carefully listening and looking out for patterns and meaning in each transcript and making notes that I would use when I began data analysis (Braun and Clarke 2012; Terry et al. 2017). I also engaged in bracketing and reduction of my own biases by keeping an open mind and the purpose of the research in order to enter the unique world of the participants (Cohen et al. 2018). I further wrote down expressions which were in line with the research questions and kept asking myself questions such as: What are the quotes saying in relation to the research questions? What does that mean to me? What exactly did the participants experience? What is the key message I am getting from the quote? All these questions helped in understanding and familiarizing myself with data, and to understand the emerging themes before the actual data analysis. Thorne (2000) points out that a researcher’s capacity to think deeply is a pre-requisite in data analysis. I was guided by the reflective questions indicated above which prompted critical thought during the analysis process.

4.7.4 Step four: Coding

This is the process of labelling or giving tags to sections of the transcribed data. Elliott (2018) argues that codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. In this study, it involved taking text data, segmenting sentences into codes and labelling them with a term often in the actual language of the participant, which Cresswell calls an ‘*in vivo*’ term. The stage required examining all the data addressing particular research question, asking the question ‘what is this about?’ (Cresswell, 2008). I was not considering substance but only the underlying meaning and recording that in

the right-hand column (Mukeredzi 2009). After working through all the data for the particular question I then listed all the ideas (underlying meanings) and clustered together similar codes into major codes, unique codes and outliers. I then referred back to my data abbreviating the topics as codes and writing the code next to a segment in the text. Coding qualitative data makes it easier to interpret generated data. Elliot (2018) states that coding is done to get to grips with our data, to understand it, to spend time with it and to render it into something we can report.

4.7.5 Step five: Clustering codes into categories

After assigning codes to the data, this stage required me to produce a descriptive wording for related codes and to reduce the list by clustering related ones into categories. After grouping these codes into categories of general meaning, they would then be reduced to those (codes) of relevant meaning (Cohen & Manion, 1989) i.e. relevant to the key question. I thus combined codes related to tools for student selection answering research question one and produced communication as a category encompassing such the codes like word of mouth, social media, print media etc. This stage which is also described as a category phase allows the researcher to narrow down to extremely few words the responses of the participants. In this study this helped me to capture the central meaning of the participants' 'lived experiences' of student teacher selection in one or two words. In my case, codes, categories and themes constituted summaries of generated data.

4.7.6 Step six: Review, redefine and clustering categories into themes

At this stage I had to scrutinize, examine and modify the categories, and then clustered the naturally related categories to form themes, and then attached names to those themes. I presented the themes, showing their relatedness while considering the participants and their responses and also bearing in mind that the responses that I was supposed to include, best answered the research questions. A theme is used to identify the major elements of an analysis of a text, since it is a higher level of categorisation. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) refer to the stage of finding themes as the stage of determining themes and summarizing. Mukeredzi (2016) also refers to this stage as a stage of scrutinizing categories of relevant meaning to

determine the central themes peculiar to these categories which will express the essence of the cluster.

Literature (Caulfield 2019) indicates that from the codes and categories that we have created, we identify patterns among them and come up with themes. So, themes here presented clusters of categories of relevant meaning to my research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The themes were therefore modified and summarized in relation to the data on student selection. This stage was also to see whether it was necessary to add other themes, thus enabling identification of general and unique themes (Mukeredzi 2009) derived from the focus group discussions, face-to-face interviews and observations. Below is a table illustrating how I coded, categorized and ended up with a theme.

Table 4.4: Sample of codes, category and themes

Question 1 What mediation tools are used in the selection and admission processes?			
DATA	CODE	CATEGORY	THEME
What happens when applications are received in the college? We capture them in the database College D, L3. They are entered in the database College B, L1. They have to create a database for the applicants College A, L1. They are recorded in the database College A, L2 All applications are captured in the database, College B, L2	Captured in the database, College D. Entered in the database, College B. Create a database, College A. Recorded in the database, College A. Captured in the database, College B.	Data storage tools	Electronic tools

Source: Researcher 2021

4.7.7 Step Seven: Hermeneutic cycle (Back to Data)

Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation, and interpretation is never closed but is ongoing, with movement of understanding from the whole, to the part, and back to the whole

(Robinson and Kerr 2015). I reviewed my themes and checked for relationships. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that reviewing themes involves checking that the themes work in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data-set. At this stage, I went back to the themes and reviewed them, comparing and contrasting the various themes, checking for overlaps, and scrutinised the themes again for distinctness and whether splitting or combining was necessary (Mukeredzi 2009). Reviewing themes may also involve collapsing two and then putting them together or splitting a theme into two or more themes or discarding some themes altogether and beginning again the process of theme development (Braun and Clarke 2006). I scrutinized the themes again for understanding, continuously moving back and forth throughout the codes, and categories, to see whether they were all represented in the themes. Reviewed literature (Widdowson 2013) suggests that at this stage there is a need for the involvement of an independent judge for verification of the categories of meaning relevant to the research questions. Therefore, I had to engage my supervisors to help confirm the themes and identify any errors and omissions.

4.7.8 Step eight: Contextualization of findings into a narrative

This was my last stage of data analysis where I had to develop an interpretation i.e. contextualization of the themes and developing a narrative. I stopped and examined my data analysis, repositioned the themes in their overall contexts from where they had emerged to see whether there were relationships (Mukeredzi 2009). This was to determine whether the analysis could be put together into a narrative that depicted a clear impression of student selection processes, as revealed in the literature. After contextualization, I then had to summarize all the focus group discussions, face-to-face interviews and observations to portray the core of the processes and practices of student teacher selection into teacher training colleges as lived and revealed by student teachers, lecturers and vice principals. At this stage, I then needed to produce a rich description of the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education from the point of view of the participants. I needed to identify direct quotations from participants' responses to support the descriptions drawing on what Mukeredzi (2016) rightfully calls capturing their views in their language and letting them speak for themselves. I was now prepared to develop an interpretation of the data into a narrative.

The above section provided the step-by-step approach to data analysis that I followed, using open coding of the data on student teacher selection practices. In the next section I discuss how I tried to enhance trustworthiness of the findings.

4.8 Trustworthiness

Connelly (2016) defined trustworthiness or rigour of study as referring to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of a study. In other words, the appropriateness of all the processes involved in this research inclusive of methods of data generation and analysis employed in order to produce a quality study. Davis (2021) defines trustworthiness as the believability of the researcher's findings, that is, all that the researcher has done in designing, carrying out and reporting the research to make the results credible. For readers to believe research findings, a standard procedure should be followed in the designing, carrying out and reporting the research findings which enhances credibility of results. While quantitative studies are evaluated through validity and reliability, Cameron (2011) indicates that trustworthiness in qualitative data and findings is evaluated through four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These aspects were considered in enhancing trustworthiness in this study and are discussed below.

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is the degree to which a study's findings represent the meanings of the research participants (Lietz and Zayas, 2010). In other words, credibility establishes whether research findings represent data drawn from the participants' original responses and offered correct and accurate interpretation of the participants' views. Nowell et al. (2017) concur with Lietz and Zayas (2010) that credibility addresses the fit between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them. In my study, some of the student teachers and lecturers were invited to check transcriptions for accuracy in capturing their responses. Member checking was also conducted before. This was in line with Guba and Lincoln (1989) who regarded member checking as the single most crucial technique for establishing credibility (Gunawan 2015). To ensure accurate data capture, I tape recorded all interviews and discussions, and I later replayed audios to check on the accuracy of the transcriptions before taking them back to participants for member checking. Besides, member checking, Korstjens and Moser (2018) suggest that credibility can be enhanced by employing triangulation. In my study, I adopted methodological

triangulation where I used three data generation techniques: focus group discussion, interviews and observation. In addition, I also used different data sources: student teachers, lecturers and vice principals. In support of the use of triangulation, Clark (2012) states that triangulation allows a researcher to view events from multiple perspectives.

4.8.2 Transferability

Shenton (2004) states that transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. This meant the possibility of transferring findings of one case study to another similar context with almost the same conditions and hoping to obtain similar results. Connelly (2018) concurs that transferability refers to the extent to which findings are useful to persons in other settings. However, Pilot and Beck (2014) note that readers determine how applicable the findings are to their situations. In other words, subsequent to reading research findings, readers decide whether the findings could be applicable in their own contexts. Anney (2014) also indicates that transferability is the extent to which the reader is able to apply the findings of the study to her or his own context. In my study, I enhanced transferability of study findings by providing thick descriptions in data presentation and analysis including thick descriptions of the research settings. This would enable readers to decide whether or not to transfer findings to similar contexts. Amankwaa (2016) states that researchers need to provide a vivid picture that will inform and resonant with readers.

4.8.3 Dependability

Dependability, also called auditability, generally refers to a situation when the research process is described in sufficient detail to facilitate another researcher repeating the work. In support to this view, Cameron (2011) concurs that dependability is about provision of sufficient details of processes and procedures in the conduct of research to enable scrutiny and corroboration. In this study, cohort sessions provided me the opportunity to reflect from comments given peers and supervisors after I presented different sections of my study. In this study, to ensure consistence in study findings and to avoid personal biases I consulted my supervisors constantly. In addition to consulting my supervisors, member checking, triangulation and prolonged engagement in the field discussed above also enhanced dependability. I also kept an audit trail - a written account of the research process that included a reporting all what occurred throughout the research project along with a demonstration of reflexivity (Mukeredzi 2016).

4.8.4 Confirmability

Shenton (2004) refers to confirmability as seeking to ensure that the findings of the research are the result of the ideas and experiences of the participants rather than the characteristics or preferences of the researcher. Findings of study should reflect the original ideas or views of the participants rather than the views of the researcher. Pilot and Beck (2012) concur with Shenton (2004) that confirmability of findings means that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided and the interpretation of those data are not invented by the inquirer. In this study, to ensure that the data generated accurately I audio -recorded participants' responses for accurate capturing and also asked participants to member check as discussed above. In addition to multiple data sources-including and the multi-modal approach to data generation, the multiple-site case study design adopted through replications, within and cross-comparisons also enhanced confirmability. Further during data generation and analysis, I tried to bracket my own perceived ideas and notions to ensure that participants' responses were truly their own. Next section discusses ethical issues that were considered throughout this research.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles discussed in this study included informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Research ethics deals with the interaction between researchers and the people they study (Family Health International 2003). When I met participants for the first time, I explained my study in adequate detail, before distributing my questionnaires. Fouka and Mantzou (2011) and Parveen and Showkat (2017) concur that ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behaviour. In this study, as the researcher, I would not be expected to harm the participants I was researching - if anything, I wanted to leave them better rather than worse off (Mukeredzi 2009). Again, drawing on Mukeredzi, as a moral person, a Catholic brought up in strong Christian background where moral values are central, I value, respect and would not want to harm other human beings. Given this background, my own moral values informed my application of procedural and regulatory ethical issues. In this study therefore, I offered participants a choice of whether or not to be engaged as study participants and informed them adequately about the research as highlighted above. I was guided by the morale code to ensure

that everything that I did was morally right and acceptable behaviour in research.

With reference to research ethics, Smith (2003) and Vanclay et.al (2013) talk about principles for ethical research involving humans and the current study observed the following three principles: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

The first ethical principle was about informed consent. Being informed meant that researcher should explain in detail to participants everything that might occur during the study in a manner that they clearly understand. In this study, I asked participants who volunteered to participate in my study when I met them the first time to sign consent forms. Fujii (2012) states that the term informed indicates that the person understands all the dimensions of the study and particularly those that involve him or her directly. Giving consent implied that the agreement to take part in the study was readily acceptable, free from coercion and undue pressure (Parveen and Showkat 2017). In this study, it was after I had given details about the study, and what participants would be required to do that I asked for volunteers. Participants also understood that this was an opportunity to air their views and experiences on student selection and would access research results from the Ministry of Higher Education where copies would be availed.

The second ethical principle is to do with anonymity. Burns and Grove (1993) define anonymity as when participants cannot be linked even by the researcher, with their individual responses subsequent to the data generation. In my study, I used pseudonyms throughout the study to ensure anonymity. Thus, real names of institutions and participants were hidden. All this was to protect participants' identities from the disclosure of information (Kimmel 2007).

The third ethical principle observed in my study was confidentiality. Polonsky (2004) refers to confidentiality as implying knowing who the participants are, but that their identity not revealed in any way in the resulting report. In this study, I kept participants identity hidden by the use of codes that I used like Student 01, 02 and lecturers as Selection Committee Member A1, Selection Committee Member B2 and so on. The same hidden identity was applied to colleges where I used labels A, B, C and D. Using numbers in place of names ensured that participants' identity remained anonymous. Confidentiality also relates to agreements made between the researcher and participants about what can and cannot be done with information collected over a course of the project (Fujii 2012). Throughout this study, I kept all data generated from participants only for the purpose of the study, shared it only with my supervisors and thereafter securely locked away by my main supervisor for five years following

which it would then be shredded. Electronic data would be stored secured with a secret security pin. Next, I discuss limitations of my study.

4.10 Limitations of the study

Limitations of a study are those things that may affect findings. In this study such things included philosophical and methodological orientations, bias and limited literature on the topic might have impacted on the findings.

The major limitation related to the philosophical location of the study. This study was located within the interpretive paradigm, which adopted case study design and qualitative humanistic and naturalistic (Creswell 2007) approaches. Consequently, findings were not generalizable. Denny and Weckesser (2019), contend that qualitative findings are not generalizable to the wider population. However, Creswell (2013) argues that the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize but to obtain in-depth understanding and it therefore targets a specific group. In addition, due to the philosophical orientation, non-probability convenience and purposive sampling designs were used to extract participants from the population. The use of these two sampling methods which did not allow equal chance of all population elements to be selected, might have left out some information-rich participants which might have impacted on the research results. However, during data generation, I probed and followed up on responses to generate as much in-depth data as I possibly could.

Limited transferability of findings due to the philosophical/paradigmatic location of the study also poses another limitation. Transferability would therefore be considered on the understanding that findings may be limited only to similar specific groups, communities and /or circumstances (Mukeredzi 2009). However, the multiple-site case studies design coupled with the multi-modal approach to data generation and multiple data sources enabled triangulation, and generation of in-depth data. This, fostered development of thick descriptions of research sites and presentation and analysis of data which would promote transferability. In this case however, the findings would be specific to the sample population in the colleges investigated and would provide insights useful for teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. Literature (Carminati 2018) shows that in case studies, transferability allows readers the option of applying results to outside contexts. However, given that the decision of transferability will be left to the researcher and reader to confirm findings based on their understanding and

experiences, the strength of the findings from this case study lies in the fact that the study involved four distinct national contexts.

Given the interpretive/qualitative nature of the study where the researcher is the main data generation instrument, researcher bias might also have influenced findings. Bias is defined as the inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group especially in a way considered to be unfair (Shah 2019). I however, made concerted efforts to bracket my own notions and pre-conceived ideas to remain open minded, probing and following up on questions to get accurate information and clarifications. Concomitant to this, observing selection interviews, conducting focus group discussions and interviews might have influenced the way participants answered questions. As the Vice Principal at one of the four colleges studied, participants (lecturers) might have asked (or students and lecturers answered) interview questions to please me which might have impacted on findings. I however, explained clearly to all participants at this college before the start of each data generation session, that my presence in selection interviews, as well as me generating data through focus group discussions and individual interviews, had nothing to do with my position in the college, but I was there as a doctoral student from DUT trying to get data purely for research purposes. For this reason, I maintained an open mind throughout the processes. While I could not detach myself from my connections with this one institution, this is only speculative.

With regards to literature, on the local and regional contexts, literature search did not yield any academic work carried out on student teacher selection. However, the lack of previous research on student teacher selection into teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe created an important opportunity for me to contribute knowledge to this area. I also took advantage of the tones of scholarly work on student selection into the medical fields from the international arena.

4.11 Summary

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology used in the study.

First, I discussed the philosophical orientation: the interpretive paradigm which guided the study including multiple-site case study research design and qualitative approach. All these linked to each other due to the subjective focus.

Second, this chapter also highlighted the population for the study as well as sampling where convenience sampling was used to extract the four accessible colleges as well as 30 student

participants per college to complete questionnaires. Purposive sampling was then employed to extract participants to take part in focus group discussions. It was from these participants that participants for face to face interviews were selected. Purposive sampling was also used to sample out lecturers per college and Vice Principals. Piloting was carried out with 12 participants at College A and the instruments: questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guide, were pilot tested.

Third, I discussed data generation and analysis. Data were generated through focus group discussion with student teachers and face to face interviews with student teachers, lecturers and vice principals. Focus group discussions and individual interviews were complemented by observations of live selection interviews generated data. The multi-modal approach to data generation enabled methodological and data triangulation which enhanced trustworthiness of my research findings. Data analysis was through manual open coding which was accomplished through eight steps.

Fourth, I discussed trustworthiness of the study findings through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I indicated that member checking enhanced credibility, while thick descriptions of the research procedures and research setting fostered transferability. To ensure dependability consultations with my supervisors was conducted and confirmability was ensured by providing an audit trail.

Fifth, I discussed ethical issues considered throughout the research in particular, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure participants were informed, I explained my study in detail before asking for volunteers who then signed consent forms before participation. Participants and colleges were identified by codes 1, 2, 3 or A, B, C and D to maintain anonymity. The data were shared with supervisors only.

Sixth, this chapter concluded by highlighting limitations of the study and how they were addressed to minimize their impact on the findings. The limitations emanated mainly from philosophical orientation, design, approach and sampling methods which hindered generalizability of findings and researcher bias. In the next chapter, I present data and analysis addressing research Question One.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: MEDIATION TOOLS USED IN STUDENT TEACHER SELECTION INTO TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES

5.1 Introduction

The study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwean teachers' colleges. To address this aim, the study was positioned within the interpretive paradigm, where a qualitative approach was adopted. The qualitative research approach taps into respondents' experiences, feelings and opinions (Taylor and Medina 2013). Data were generated through interviews with eight lecturers and three Vice Principals who were members of the college selection committees in the four colleges (see Appendix 4), and 40 student teachers, (see Appendix 5). In addition, I carried out observations of eight selection live interview sessions, two at each college (see Appendix 6). Additional data was generated through eight focus group meetings with students (see Appendix 7) to triangulate their perspectives regarding the selection processes in the colleges.

Data analysis was carried out in two stages: in-field inductive analysis to identify patterns emerging, followed by end-of-data generation deductive analysis to identify themes. Deductive analysis was through open-coding which commenced with sorting and organising the data according to research questions, followed by coding, categorising and clustering categories into themes.

In this chapter, analysis of the data generated for Question One is presented. In the presentation and analysis, I integrated responses from all the participants (students, selection committee lecturers, and Vice Principals), and from all the data sources (interviews, observations and focus group discussions). This strategy was adopted because the responses were generally similar.

The study revolves around the key question, "What are the dynamics of entry into selected teacher education institutions in Zimbabwe?" To answer this key question, three critical research questions needed to be answered. These are:

- 1) What mediation tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges?

2) What rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?

3) How do stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies for teacher training?

In discussing these findings, I draw on literature discussed in Chapter 2 to show any concurrences or contradictions with my findings. To analyse and explain the findings addressing the selection processes in the participating colleges, this study draws on CHAT as a theoretical lens. CHAT was discussed in detail in Chapter 3 and is briefly presented in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Student teacher selection process chart activity system

Student Teacher Selection processes CHAT Activity System

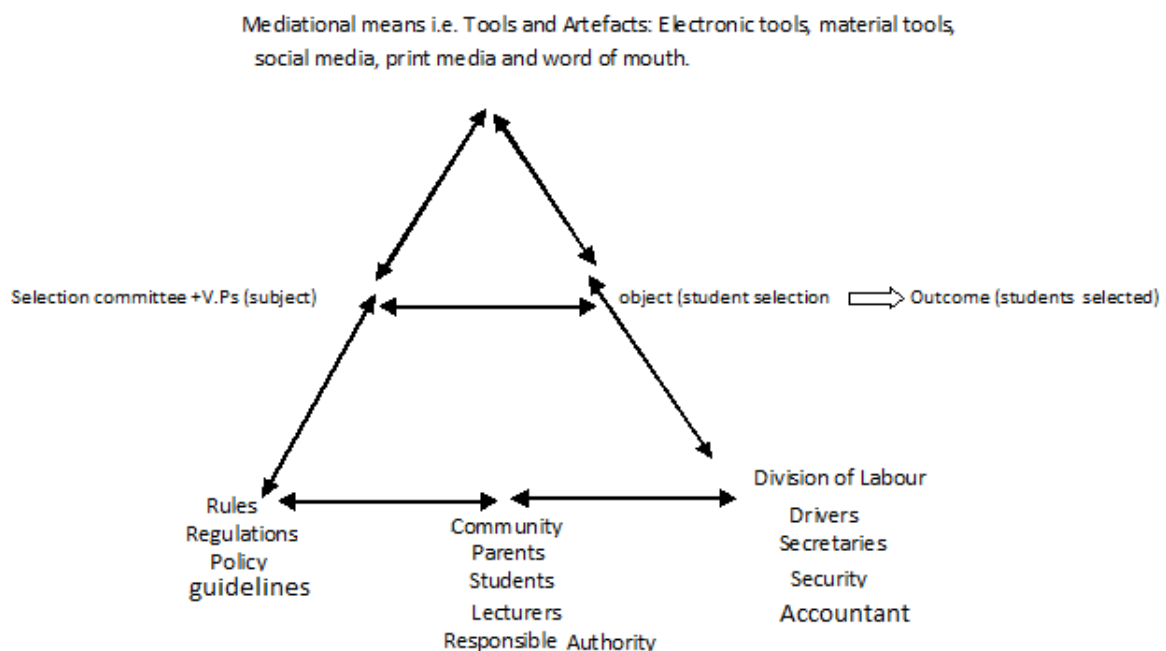


Figure 5.1: Adapted from (Engestrom, 2001)

CHAT focuses on how people engage in activity in collaboration (Engestrom 2004). The CHAT framework is based on seven nodes or elements which constitute the activity system: subject, object, tools, rules, community, division of labour, and outcome (Marwan 2019; Bandara 2018). In this study the selection committee (lecturers and Vice Principals) represent the subjects. The targeted object is the selection process. The psychological and material resources (Billy 2004) used in the student selection process represent the mediational tools. The guidelines or policies for student selection represent the rules which shape and guide the

whole activity system (Wilson 2014). The stakeholders in and outside the institutions, including all interested parties, form the community and the allocation of roles and responsibilities within these institutions constitute the division of labour (James 2014). Finally, the outcome is the product of the selection process: in this case, students selected for admission.

In addition to the CHAT theoretical lens, I also draw on the concepts around the funnel approach to student selection, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, to complement CHAT because it does not trace and explain the stages that each student goes through from stage one to enrollment. The funnel approach begins when applications for vacancies have been received and continues up to the time when students are ready for enrollment. This approach to student selection involves five stages: prospects, inquiries, applicants, admissions and enrolled students (Zinn and Johansson 2015). In this study prospects represent all potential candidates and inquiries are all those who made enquiries for vacancies in a particular college. Applicants are those who applied to a college and admission stands for those who were successful and received offer letters. The enrolled students have already paid their fees and are now registered students.

In this study, each research question constitutes a chapter. This particular chapter addresses the first research question: *What mediation tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges?* The chapter is organized into four major themes: electronic and technological mediational tools, material mediational tools, tools that provided vacancy information, and selection interviews. These major themes which address this first research question are discussed and summarized in turn below.

In presenting findings, to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, participants are identified by codes, for instance, colleges are identified by letters College A, B, C or D. Students are identified by codes, for instance, Student 01, 02 and 03, and for Selection Committee Members by letters depicting their colleges for instance A1, B2, C3.

5.2 Electronic and technological mediational tools

There were two forms of electronic/technological mediational tools: computer database and cell phone. As explained above and in Chapter 3, from a CHAT perspective (Joo 2014) electronic and technological mediational tools are artifacts which enable subjects (selection committee and Vice Principals) to act on the object (selection). These electronic tools were the

gadgets, including software, which were used to record and store data. In this study, the participants called these gadgets, databases. According to Morley and Parker (2015) a database is a collection of related data stored in a manner that enables information to be retrieved as needed. This implies that database is information of an organisation, individual or group of people that is put together and kept in such a way that it can be retrieved when it is needed. For instance, a college can bring together data from various departments and store them in a computer database, in such a way that the college can easily access it when it is needed.

These electronic mediational tools (Engestrom 2004) from a CHAT perspective facilitated student selection processes by storing data for accessing at a later stage. Students' biographical information was captured in the databases immediately after applications for vacancies were received in the colleges for later use. According to the enrolment funnel, capturing of data in the database takes place during the second stage of the journey of the prospective student which is known as the inquiries stage (Zinn and Johansson 2015). With reference to applications received in college, a participant at College A, Selection Committee Member A3, said:

When applications have been received, our secretaries have to sort the letters according to denominations and performance. We (members of the selection committee) have to create a database for the applicants.

It was the duty of the secretaries to sort out and arrange applications according to O level performance and denominations. From the CHAT framework secretaries are members of the community, who were performing their allocated roles and responsibilities according to the division of labour (Joo 2014). With regard to division of labour, allocation of roles and responsibilities to community members is based on their skills. No one holds the monopoly on knowledge of all the skills, hence the division of work according to one's ability (Trust 2017).

Performance in this case refers to O level symbols or passes that applicants achieved. According to Mukeredzi (2013) secondary education in Zimbabwe was structured following the British Education system and had three stages. Stage One was the Junior Certificate level obtained after two years of secondary education. This stage has since been abandoned. Then, at Stage Two, candidates sat for Cambridge Ordinary Level Certificate after four years of secondary education. It was the students with O level qualifications who were eligible for training as teachers. The third stage, the Cambridge Advanced Level Certificate, was obtained

after six years of secondary education. For entry into teacher education or other civil service professions, the required minimum is five subjects at Grade 'C' (50%) pass or higher ('A' being highest mark with at least 80%) to obtain an O Level Certificate (Mukeredzi 2013). The core five subjects required for an individual to be eligible for entry into teacher education or any formal training include English, History, Mathematics, Science and a technical/vocational subject (Mukeredzi, 2013). Hence, in this study, applicants with more 'A' Grade passes would be ranked highly and those with 'C' grades would come last. This grouped information was then kept in the database.

The denominations refer to religious or church groupings like the Reformed Church, Anglican, Catholic or Lutheran Church. Fairchild (2019) defined denomination as a religious organisation (an association or fellowship) that unites local congregations in a single legal and administrative body. A denomination is a fellowship group from a Christian church with fully autonomous authority legally and administratively. So, College A, for example, each of the major conventional churches would be allocated a certain % of the total available vacancies. The classification of applications was to ensure that applicants aligned to the denomination of the given responsible authority of the college attained a fair share of vacancies. For instance, in a Catholic Church college (College A), 75% of vacancies was allocated to Catholic applicants. According to Selection Committee Meeting Minutes, (August, 03, 2018), this practice was adopted to enable evangelisation continuity within the college. The remaining 25% would be distributed among the remaining church denominations. In the CHAT framework, church denominations are part of the community and these stipulations of % allocations represent rules, the guidelines which define how subjects are expected to behave in the selection processes and the duties they should perform in enacting the object to achieve the outcome in the activity system (Wilson 2014).

Subsequent to classification of the applications according to denominations to ensure denominational representation, arranging applications according to O level performance followed. This promoted selection of the best candidates first. Selection Committee Member A3 was not clear on what happens to the applications of those who do not belong to any church.

Another participant, Selection Committee Member D3, during individual interviews in College D responded:

All the information is entered in the computer database, particularly the O level subjects' results.

This practice of capturing data enabled a more manageable process of student selection considering the huge volumes of applications received. In an article in the Newsday, 24 May, 2014, Marufu (2014b) said, “*Teachers’ colleges interview 8 000 applicants for 500 vacancies.*” The article clearly illustrated the large volume of applications that colleges generally received. In addition to the above article, vice principals in Colleges B, C and D during interviews, explaining the trend of applications in the past five years indicated that in 2018 alone they had received 4 500, 2 500 and 1 500 applications respectively. As a vice principal of the participating college, I concurred with other three VPs. Yet their colleges had capacities ranging from 500 to 600 students only (Source: Interviews with Vice Principals). From the comments by Selection Committee Member D3 above it is not clear who physically participated in capturing the applicants’ information or details. From a CHAT perspective (Trust 2017) participants are the subjects who act on the object using mediational tools (the capturing of information details in databases). Capturing subject grades of the huge numbers of applicants cited above requires honesty and diligence of all involved to ensure accuracy and error-free records.

In addition to academic subject details, another participant, Selection Committee Member B1, during the individual interview at College B explained:

All applications are captured in the database so as to account for all the applications. This is done for both those who meet the requirements and those whose applications are not in order. The total number of all applications is very important for statistical purposes. For instance, if one would like to compare the figures for popularity rating of the college or to see whether student figures are going up or down.

The participant suggested that regardless of whether one met the requirements or not, details for all applications were captured in the database for accountability and any future reference. However, it is not clear what happened to those whose applications did not qualify. Accountability referred to by Selection Committee Member B1 at College B refers to capturing information for purposes of giving an explanation later if required. Another reason was to maintain the year-to-year trends which could assist in institutional planning for student facilities like learning venues, as well as for gauging college popularity in terms of demand for vacancies.

Responding to the question on what happens when applications were received in college, the Vice Principal at College B replied, *"They are entered in the database."* The participant confirmed the use of the database in their college. The difference between the two participants lies in the details that they provided. Selection Committee Member B1 and the Vice Principal from College B concur on the use of the database although the Vice Principal was not clear on the reason for entering in the database. Besides the database or the computer, another electronic device that was used was the cell phone. The cell phone receives SMS messages sent by colleges through the computer. According to Fabula (2007) the short message sending service (SMS) belongs to electronic information. Electronic information is delivered through electronic devices like computers and cell phone. SMS means the sent or received message itself and so SMS stands for the texts sent via mobile phones (Fabula 2007). To invite candidates for interviews colleges used SMS messages as explained by Selection Committee Member A4 from College A, who commented, *"We then call those who qualify through modern technology SMS message."* Those who qualify are those candidates who meet the entry requirements for teacher training. Using computers, messages were sent and received via cell phones by the candidates. Through observations that I conducted, I witnessed three batches of 50 candidates being sent invitation information through the bulk messages system.

From College C one selection committee member confirmed the use of SMS in their college when he pointed out, *"After short listing, we invite candidates for interviews using SMS."* This is done after short listing because the selection committee have reduced the number of applicants to a reasonable level, taking into account that there are large numbers that apply.

From the students' side, during individual interviews Student 08 from College A said, *"Then, I applied and was replied through SMS and went for interviews."* The participant acknowledged the receipt of the SMS message sent by the college inviting him for an interview. Although the participant is not clear when he went for the interview, from my observation it was always soon after the messages were sent that interviews were conducted. This was done to give about a week to prepare for interviews and transport. Another student, from College C, during individual interviews confirmed the use of SMS messages: *"I then received an invitation SMS saying I am invited to an interview."* (Student 09). Again, it was short listing by the selection committee that produced the invitees. According to the funnel theory, those coming for interviews are applicants in Stage Three (Copeland 2009).

The vice principals and the selection committee members from Colleges A, B and D concurred that colleges created databases and entered information. However, the Vice Principal and the selection committee members from College C did not mention anything to do with the database. They used words like they were ‘registered, logged in and recorded’ at reception. It would appear the database was not in their vocabulary because logging in suggests use of a computer. Contrary to my observations, all the four colleges had computer centres where all data were entered and kept. In fact, if any candidate’s name did not appear in the interview room, then candidates were often referred to these centres for checking. The electronic tools used in the selection and admission of students included the computer database which was used for the storage of data and the cell phone for sending SMS messages. In the CHAT framework electronic tools are mediational tools/artifacts that facilitate enacting the object, in this case, used in the selection of students. In addition to electronic tools, material mediation tools which are discussed below were employed to enact the object.

5.3 Material mediation tools

The material mediational tools involved the use of hard components such as written tests, interview schedules, files, and application and recommendation letters. These are discussed in the following section.

5.3.1 *Written tests*

Written tests emerged as one of the material mediation tools used in the selection processes. These were structured question items which were answered by the candidates just before the oral interviews. However, it was only in one college that written tests were administered as mentioned by the Vice Principal, lecturers and students. Explaining these written tests, the Vice Principal of College D in the individual interview commented:

There are two main processes. First, there is a 30-minute written test. After the written interview, candidates proceed to attend the oral interview which may last up to ten minutes. After the two interviews, the selection committee collects all scripts for marking. They are assisted by the members from the various subject areas.

From the participant's view, the written tests were taken first. The reason was not clear but it would appear that they wanted them to leave after the oral interviews. From the comments it would appear that members from the various subject areas who participated in the marking process helped to collect the scripts. As a VP of a participating college, written tests served to select quality student teachers.

This was done to speed up the process and shorten waiting time. From the literature surveyed, Finland, Japan and the Caribbean (Mark and Remy 2005) used written tests during student selection processes. In accordance with the CHAT framework, the selection committee members, (subjects) together with members from other subject areas (community), collected and marked the scripts. This was in line with division of labour which allocated duties to community members according to their skills. From the enrollment funnel approach, this is the third stage of the journey where applicants are pruned further through the tests and interviews, narrowing the funnel further (Zinn and Johansson 2015).

Selection Committee Member D2 during the individual face to face interviews at College D pointed to the use of written tests as a tool when he said, "*We use written tests and marks for oral tests to select student teachers. Our tests demand that candidates solve problems and demonstrate some etiquette.*" It appears the tests included Mathematics, Science and English because most problem-solving issues were common in these subjects. English may have been included because it is used to test communication skills and language proficiency. Etiquette refers to behaviour that is expected of a professional person. Candidates were expected to answer questions that show such behaviour in the written tests. These students were asked about written tests. Student Teacher 01 from College D, during an interview, confirmed his participation in the written test saying, "*I had written interview and verbal or oral interview. This was manned by interviewers.*" By using the term 'manned' the participant suggested that it was only men who conducted the interviews. Knowingly or unknowingly, this implies gender bias towards men. Again, in most teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe today there are often more female lecturers than males: it is very unlikely that selection processes involved male lecturers only. In the CHAT framework, students wrote written tests (mediational tools) supervised by subjects (interviewers) to act on the object (student selection) and achieve the outcome (selected students) as expected by the community in accordance with the division of labour. Drawing from the funnel theory, this is the Admitted Students' stage (Taj 2015), shown by a markedly reduced number of students in comparison with those interviewed.

From College A during focus group interviews Student 02 said, “*At College A it was fair because I had been at College D where both written and oral interviews are administered. Most students did not pass, because the written test is tricky.*” The participant confirmed that indeed written tests were administered at College D. A tricky written test requires care and skill because it is not as easy as it looks. It would appear that the participant found the written test demanded too much from her. From the literature survey, with particular reference to Finland, candidates write examinations on assigned books and pedagogy, then conduct a demonstration lesson of 10 to 15 minutes (Lukas and Samardzic 2015). This is in contrast to Zimbabwe where a 30-minute written test, complemented by a 10-minute oral interview, is the key criterion for entry into a teacher education programme. From my observations of interview sessions, a few candidates could not be located to attend oral interviews after the written tests. It appeared as if some candidates were surprised that there was yet another stage – the oral interview. If students were not well informed of the stages or process of selection this could be a contradiction from a CHAT standpoint. However, many were ready to go on with the interviews after the written test. In the United States and Canada (Casey and Childs 2007) tests are a common tool with written and practical components and candidates must pass both.

From the evidence provided by the Vice Principal at College D, Selection Committee Member D3 and Student 01 written tests were the mediational tools used in the selection of students. However, three participating colleges in the study did not use written tests to select students. They used 10-minute oral interviews only. The lack of uniformity in the methods and criterion for selecting students into teacher education programmes is a contradiction from a CHAT perspective. However, drawing from the CHAT framework students wrote written tests (mediational tools) which facilitated the selection process, in accordance with the rules (regulations and guidelines) of the community in line the division of labour.

There are still other material mediational tools used in student teacher selection that the prospective student teachers were required to bring, i.e., the documents which are discussed below.

5.3.2 Documents students bring

In this study, some of the material mediational tools used by the selection committee to select students were students’ academic and personal documents. Responding to the question, “what

documents did you ask students to bring?” Selection Committee Member C1 during individual interview at College C said:

We want them to bring their originals and photocopies of all the certificates. This is done so that we can authenticate that they are the real candidates attending the interviews.

In addition to the documents stated above, Selection Committee Member A1 in the individual interviews at College A had this to say:

First, one must have an application letter which is accompanied by photocopies of identity card, birth certificate, academic certificate and a recommendation letter. Those are the documents required. In addition, information communication technology and early childhood development qualification or certificate in coaching is treated as added advantage.

At College B, Selection Committee Member B2 said, “*We ask to see the I.D. and compare with the O level certificate.*” Selection committee member D3 at College D said, “*We check certified copies and whether they are really authentic.*” The selection committee members from the four colleges show marked differences in what they ask candidates to bring for interviews. The demand for documents is consistent with surveyed literature which states that many countries, particularly in Latin America, officially require a birth certificate to enroll students (Hunter 2019).

College C required originals and photocopies while College A asked for the application and recommendation letter. College B required and checked the identity card and O level certificate but College D needed only certified copies. There seemed to be no plausible reason for these differences. The differences did not only manifest themselves between colleges but also within colleges. This was observed during individual interviews where one member said one thing and another said something else. For instance, at College A two selection committee members were asked about materials used in student teacher selection. Selection Committee Member A1 said, “*First, one must have an application letter which is accompanied by photocopies of I.D., birth certificate, academic certificate and a recommendation letter. Those are the documents required. In addition, I.C.T. and E.C.D. qualifications or certificates in coaching are treated as added advantage.*” Selection Committee Member A4 at the same college answered, “*Most*

important forms include original certificate I.D. and birth certificates. These are compared with the certified photocopies.” The glaring differences in the two responses were that Selection Committee Member A1 had additional documents like an application letter, a recommendation letter, I.C.T. and E.C.D qualifications, while Selection Committee Member A4 had only three documents, namely, the original certificate, I.D. and birth certificates. This was an example of a contradiction from CHAT perspective given that people in the same college say different things on the same issue.

In light of the above contradictions it became very difficult to reconcile the facts and establish the truth. This is what Kim and Klassen (2018) refer to as the ad hoc conducting of interviews. With such differences, one wondered what they were checking and how they established authenticity of the documents. It would be difficult to assess the suitability of the candidates using different documents, particularly in the same institution, where the selection committee members were at variance with regards to the documents used in student selection

However, there was some consistency from the students. Responding to the same question about documents required, at College C during individual interviews Student 04 replied, *“O Level certificates, national identity card, birth certificate and invitation message.”* Similarly, at College D during interviews Student 05 said, *“Identity card, birth certificate and marriage certificate.”* In contrast to these two colleges, during individual interviews Student 06 at College A said, *“Academic certificates, identity card, birth certificate, baptism card and marriage certificate.”* During individual interviews, Student 07 at College B commented, *“Birth certificate, baptism certificate, identity card, marriage certificate if applicable, academic certificates. I think that is all.”* From the individual interviews with students at two colleges, C and D concurred that they were asked to bring three items, namely, their identity card, birth certificate and academic certificates. This was in contrast to no discerning pattern that emerged from the selection committee members at College A. In Colleges A and B there was the addition of the marriage certificate and invitation message. There was some similarity between Colleges A and B. The baptism certificate and marriage certificate appeared to be the two additions to the identity card, birth certificate and academic certificates in these two colleges. At College A the Catholic Church insisted on identifying the baptised followers for statistical purposes. Thus, while the church sponsored college required a baptism certificate and a marriage certificate, in College B this was not applicable. Again, in the CHAT framework, this is a contradiction because there is no uniformity in selection requirements across the wider community. It was not expected that there be such contradictions in the requirements by the colleges running the same

programmes and run by the same ministry. The other three colleges did not ask for those documents, even though one of these three colleges was a church run institution. Both the students and selection committee members in all colleges concurred on three basic mediational tools: identity card, birth certificate and academic certificates.

The demand for identity documents was consistent with literature. According to the Teaching Council in New Zealand (2019) proof of identity helps prevent identity fraud. In addition to the prevention of fraud and protection of children, Makannah (1981) argued that the birth records provide documentary proof of identity and civil status such as age, nationality (citizenship) and parentage. Also, proof of age is demanded to enter schools or, in this case, to enter college in Sierra Leone (Makannah 1981). Hunter, Borges and Sugiyama (2018) highlight the importance of these documents by pointing out that if you wish to have any standing in law, you must have a document that officials accept as evidence of citizenship: that document may be a birth certificate, passport or identity card. From the CHAT perspective, the identity card, birth certificate and academic certificates were all mediational tools used by the subjects to enact on the object as expected by the division of labour in accordance with the rules and norms of the community.

Reference to the application letter mentioned by Selection Committee Member A1 at College A is supported by Clandinin and Husa (2017) who explain that in the U.S.A. the selection process involved an initial application form or letter. What was different here was that this college expected other additional documents which gave applicants an added advantage. While the application letter assisted in showing one's uniqueness given the huge numbers of applications, there were challenges that could be triggered by their use. Admittedly the application letter distinguished one individual from the rest if the letter was well structured and phrased. But who read these huge piles of letters and where would one get time to do this kind of work? These additional documents created far more responsibilities and roles for secretaries who did the sorting as expected by the division of labour. Besides the sorting challenges, how did the subjects authenticate the recommendation letters as they were written by many different referees? It appeared very difficult for the subjects to assess candidates on different levels – some with recommendation letters and others without. Drawing from the CHAT framework, this is another contradiction because there are variations in requirements for selection interviews. Considering that College A, is a church sponsored institution the recommendation letters mattered a lot because they spelt out the guilds to which church members belonged. Drawing from the literature

survey, the use of reference letters as a qualitative selection criterion is common in the United Kingdom, Taiwan and the United States of America (Heinz (2013). The rating of reference letters was found to be highly correlated with overall programme performance (Heinz 2013). From the CHAT perspective, the application and recommendation letters were mediational tools used by the subjects to enact the object to ensure that the outcome was achieved.

Apart from the application and recommendation letters, there were other forms of material mediational tools used during interviews.

5.3.3 Material mediational tools used during interviews

In addition to the students' academic and personal identity documents discussed above other material mediational tools used during the interview sessions included an interview schedule and the filled-in forms. Regarding the interview schedule, Selection Committee Member A1 at College A pointed out:

If prospective students have been invited, we come with an interview instrument. This instrument is crafted by senior members of staff and then sold to staff for adoption. The instrument has ten questions and each has mark allocation of five. The students are allocated marks during the interviews.

The instrument was deliberated on by staff because they wanted to standardise it and ensure that they familiarised themselves with the questions and, also, so that all interviewing panels used the instrument in a similar way. This was because the scores were compared with each other to enable the selection committee to select the best students.

Still referring to the interview questions, Selection Committee Member D2 from College D during individual interviews commented, "*We use the interview guides/interview schedules to select students.*" According to Frances, Coughlan and Cronni (2009) interview schedules employ standardised (structured) and explicit questions which do not allow veering off the question. Interview guides permit the interviewer to explore a number of different issues around a specific subject. For our purposes, the interview schedules were the appropriate term because they were dealing with structured questions.

The Vice Principal at College C commented, "*Our questions are the same for all the candidates. We do not allow our members to probe because probing may lead to correct answers and advantage some candidates.*" The participant meant that probing would provide

hints to some candidates while some might not get the same hints because some interviewers would not provide similar hints. From my observations of the interview sessions, all colleges run standardisation exercises to ensure that interviewers ask questions in the same way and that all questions mean the same thing across all interviewers. During observation of the interview sessions I witnessed that the standardisation exercises were done in the morning just before interviews. From the CHAT standpoint, interview schedules are mediational tools that are used by Selection Committee Members (subjects) to enact the object (student selection) in accordance with rules of the community, as allocated by the division of labour (Joo 2014).

Regarding the filled-in forms, one Selection Committee Member C2 at College C said, *“We have the documents we use for the interviews. We have forms where we write their results, names and results from panels. These are the instruments that we keep for three years that they (students) are in college.”* The filled-in forms seemed to be important because they provided evidence for any future reference should that be needed and, hence, they were kept for the three years that students were in college. Similarly, College B confirmed the use of the filled-in forms during the Focus Group Discussion when Student 10 said, *“They were taking some information from the identity card and birth certificate to the interview form.”* The response confirms the use of the interview filled-in form. On further probing Selection Committee Member B4 at College B indicated that the filled-in forms captured the candidate’s name, contact address, contact number, academic history, subject passes, intended course (early childhood development or general) and disabilities.

Still on the filled-in forms, Selection Committee Member A3 at College A during individual interviews pointed out that, *“We use the score sheet for selecting our candidates.”* The use of the term ‘score sheet’ marks a difference in the use of words: they were referring to the same thing. From the information the forms captured it was clear that the filled-in form, interview form and score sheet served the same purpose.

The evidence above illustrates that interview schedules and filled-in forms were the mediational tools that were used in the selection of students into teachers’ colleges. All colleges used material mediational tools in student selection. Interview schedules guided interviewers regarding questions. Filled-in forms were used to capture student information for future reference. In the CHAT framework, mediational tools facilitate the student selection process by capturing information for future reference.

In addition to the material mediational tools used in student selection, the selection interview was the major mediational tool. This is discussed in the following section.

5.4 Selection interviews

Student selection interviews emerged from the generated data as a major theme under mediational tools. These selection interviews were conducted by the subjects (lecturers) on the aspiring students (candidates) to determine their suitability to be selected for entry into teacher education. The importance and value of interviews was emphasized by Selection Committee Member B1 during interviews at College B who commented, *“Performing very well in the interviews is the fourth criterion. Somebody who may score a total of 50 but failing the interview, this is not a suitable candidate for teacher training. The candidate must pass the interview with at least 30 out of 60.”* A criterion is a standard by which something is judged. What came through from that response was that performances in both the selection interview and the written test were critical for a candidate to be selected.

However, Selection Committee Member A4 during interviews at College A thought otherwise when he argued, *“Since an interview takes 10 minutes the issues on character should not be included because normally people pretend in the interview.”* Given that candidates did not show their true behaviour during interviews, character was not assessed in the interview. While participant B1 seemed to heighten the value of the selection interview tool, participant A4 pointed out that this mediational tool could not assess character. This means that the interview was not a good tool for determining student teacher quality attributes.

Students across the four colleges expressed their views about the quality of the interviews, as exemplified by Student 11 from College C who said, *“It was a bit challenging because when I looked at my certificate with only Cs, I felt some discomfort. It was only God’s time to determine the result, I thought.”* The participant suggested that the interview was difficult for him. The participant’s fears were further compounded by the realisation that the results on their O level certificate were not strong.

Another participant, Student 12 at the same college, had similar experiences. The student commented, *“It was very difficult because I lacked confidence since it was first time.”* Unlike Student 11 above whose fear emanated from their low O level results, this participant lacked confidence due to inexperience. However, these two participants concurred that the interview

was not easy to get through. This implies that the selection interview instrument was probably serving the intended purpose, i.e., to select suitable candidates for teacher training.

Some students had different experiences from those discussed above. Student 13 from College A during interviews said, *“The interview was really quite good because the questions were easy as they were the same as those I was asked at College D.”* What comes through is that the interview attended previously exposed her to similar questions which gave her experience and confidence in answering selection interview questions.

Similarly, at College D Student 14 during interviews said, *“After being told by others outside the rooms, that questions on Zim ASSET will be asked, the interview really surprised me. It was simple matter. I really enjoyed and the interviewers were friendly.”* The participant innocently accepted being tipped about the content of the interview. Zim-ASSET is the acronym for Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation. According to Nyamangodo, Chademana and Chigsa (2014) Zim-ASSSET is a cluster-based plan reflecting the strong need to fully exploit the internal relationships and linkages that exist between the various facets of the economy. This was a government initiative with the education sector that candidates were expected to know, hence, it was included on the interview schedule. The participant was clear that candidates shared selection interview questions. This meant that the participant knew the questions and answers before she was interviewed. The sharing of questions is a contradiction from the CHAT perspective emanating from the community regarding the use of mediation tools. This defeated the purpose of the selection interview. From the interview session observations, I noted that difficult interview questions were only answered well by the candidates who attended the interview after the first day. This may confirm the issue of sharing questions raised by Student 14 above. From the literature Clandinin and Husa (2017) point out that sharing interview questions becomes a problem of faking where some people are motivated to distort responses. Another pitfall was identified by Byrne and Challen (2004) who argued that interviews may not be effective due to the subjectivity of judgments and factors influencing these are often found to be assessing personality more than potential ability to do the job. Some prospective students may have been selected not because they could effectively do the job of teaching but because they answered questions well, even though others had shared those questions before the interview. The major strength of the interview is that it is one tool that is used to assess the very important non-academic attributes which are often very difficult to measure.

Elsewhere, India, Pakistan and Iran used interviews to admit PhD students into medical education programmes (Mehridehnavi 2015). It also emerged that in Denmark, Finland, Korea, Scotland, Singapore and England interviews were conducted to select suitable candidates for the teaching course (Figuroa and Wittenberg 2015; Byrne and Challen 2004). Despite the pitfalls cited above, interviews were the major tool used in all four of the colleges under review. In the CHAT framework the selection interview was an important mediational tool used by subjects (lecturers and vice principals) to enact on the object (student selection) to achieve the outcome (selected students). Besides the selection interview, sources for vacancy information for prospective students was another mediational tool.

5.5 Sources for vacancy information as mediational tools

Another major theme that emerged from the generated data related to where prospective students obtained information about vacancies for teacher training. Information sources have been defined as carriers of information, for instance, a person or book, a repository that can provide knowledge or information (Agwal 2011). From the data, three sources emerged: print media, word of mouth and Social Media.

5.5.1 Print media

One source of vacancy information was the newspaper or print media. Print media is mass communication in the form of printed publications such as newspapers or magazines. According to Mellinger (2018), print media is the printed version of telling the news through newspapers and magazines. It was through the newspapers that all colleges in Zimbabwe advertised the news about the teacher training vacancies for prospective students to apply. The process of marketing or advertising for vacancies involved the colleges and the Ministry of Higher Education. Prospective students located the advertisements published in the local newspapers. These prospective students applied to colleges of their choice. Advertisements were made after the Ministry of Higher Education approved the advertisements. With reference to how students obtained information about the vacancies, Student 15 during the individual interviews, at College A said *“In 2016, I was checking the newspaper and saw the advertisement. I applied for the teacher training vacancies.”* At College A most of the comments were similar to the one above. In fact, almost all students who participated individually in the interviews obtained the information about the teacher training vacancies

from the newspaper. Drawing from surveyed literature, Miller and Watson (2012) and Samiksha (2019) concur that the newspaper has the advantage that it is a permanent medium, as the messages are imprinted permanently with high storage value which makes them suitable for reference and research. At College A the highest users of the newspaper were found in the individual interviews. This was probably because the newspaper provided the most easily available form of communication even in rural areas. However, the results from the focus group discussion told a different story: very few students had used newspapers.

In sharp contrast to College A, College B had the lowest number of students who got information about the teacher training vacancies from the newspaper. Almost everyone obtained information about teacher training vacancies through different sources other than the newspaper. However, during focus group discussion at College B Student 16 said, "*I saw it in the newspaper.*" Nearly half of the students from College B during the focus group discussion obtained information about the teacher training vacancies from the newspaper. This was so maybe because print media is cheap and people can afford to buy and also read them at their convenience (Samiksha 2019).

In comparison to College B, during the individual interviews at College C many students consulted the newspaper to get information about teacher training vacancies. This was exemplified by Student 20 from College C who said, "*I heard from the advertisement from the newspaper.*" In the focus group discussion at College C many students indicated obtaining vacancy information from newspapers. While Colleges A and C recorded fairly high numbers of students who used newspapers to get information about teacher training vacancies, College D had the lowest number of students who got information about teacher training vacancies from the newspaper. Just like prospective students in rural areas, the newspaper was available in the urban areas. From literature surveyed, Joseph (2017) says that print media is an easy medium to spread awareness or advertise to any particular geographical area. Hence, a local newspaper appeared to be the best way to spread the news about any local events or activities. For instance, Student 21 from College D commented, "*I saw it in the Sunday Mail.*" On the whole, evidence from all teachers' colleges shows that students obtained information about teacher training vacancies from newspapers. Print media has the advantage of having a longer impact on the mind of the reader, with more in-depth reporting and analysis (Samiksha 2019). Within the CHAT perspective, the newspaper is a mediational tool used by the subjects to enact the object in accordance with the division of labour. In addition to the newspaper, word of

mouth also emerged as another mediational tool – a source of information about vacancies that was used by students.

5.5.2 Word of mouth

Word of mouth became a source of information when vital information was passed from one person to another verbally. From literature consulted (Reddy 2019) verbal communication involves words that are spoken. Poorly worded verbal communication can lead not only to distortion of the facts but also to distortion of thoughts and intentions (Jones 2019). However, the information conveyed in this case was important as the student was able to apply and get selected. Therefore, the manner in which information was passed from one person to another mattered because the procedure of passing the message could affect the interpretation of the message and send wrong signals. Many students referred to word of mouth as a source from where they obtained vacancy information. To exemplify the use of word of mouth, Student 21 during individual interviews at College B said, *“I heard of the teaching vacancies at the colleges at St Stephens Parish in Kwekwe... and I immediately applied for the vacancy.”* At College B few students during the individual interviews referred to the use of word of mouth to get information about the teaching training vacancies. During the focus group discussion at College B word of mouth was mentioned. However, notwithstanding possible distortion, this was the cheapest source of receiving information because nobody paid to get the information. In addition, if the person passing the message had good intentions then this benefited others. Literature points out that while the importance of verbal communication is to convey intent and ensure accuracy in human interaction, misinterpretation often leads to poor results (Jones 2019). Word of mouth was not popular among students at College B. This source of information was confirmed by Student 22 at College D during the individual interviews who explained, *“I have a friend who lives near the college. He told me about it and I applied.”* Surveyed literature shows that word of mouth is effective due to the strong ties between senders and receivers (Lopez and Sicilia 2014). According to Demirabas (2018) strong ties refers to relationships with friends, family members and partners with whom one can connect actively. Similarly, Ishida, Slevitch and Siamionava (2016) indicate that word of mouth emanating from friends and relatives was the most powerful factor in forming tourists’ destination images in a study on how tourists received information about tourist resorts in the U.S.A. During the individual interviews at College D word of mouth as a source of vacancy information was mentioned by a few participants. In contrast to College D, at College A Student 23 during

individual interviews said, *“It was announced at our church on Sunday. I went to the priest, Father Zama (not real name), and he advised me to apply. I then applied.”* Word of mouth was very popular at this particular college. This is consistent with literature which shows that personal word of mouth tends to be more influential than commercial word of mouth on receivers’ decision-making (Ishida et al. 2016). This message was, thus, influential.

At College C during focus group discussion Student 24 said, *“I was told by another teacher in the nearby school.”* From the surveyed literature, these may be classified as weak ties as these are relationships with acquaintances, ex-colleagues and others with whom one may connect passively (Demirabas 2018). Like at College D, many students got information through word of mouth. It emerged as a source of information. At mission colleges word of mouth was very popular. This was probably so because the church had the responsibility to support their followers. According to Demirabas (2018), strong ties are perceived to be more influential than weak ties in shaping the word of mouth communication process. Getting information from a teacher at a nearby school seemed to have been a weak tie. The use of word of mouth in passing information was consistent with literature which stated the importance of verbal communication as that of sharing ideas and informing others of what they intended to convey (Reddy 2019). The priests, friends and teachers, all members of the community, shared information about the teacher training vacancies.

From the evidence provided here, students from all the participating colleges concurred that they made use of word of mouth to get information about teacher training vacancies although their numbers varied. The newspaper was the most common source of information across all colleges and word of mouth the least. In College A the newspaper was mentioned more than in B and word of mouth was most popular in College B. Word of mouth was least mentioned in College A. In the CHAT framework, word of mouth is a mediational tool used by subjects to enact the object in accordance with rules of the community (priests, teachers and friends) as expected by the division of labour.

Apart from newspapers and word of mouth, social media also played a key mediational role in the facilitation of student selection by being a source of vacancy information as discussed below.

5.5.3 Social media

Social media comprises the following platforms: internet, face book, twitter, instagram and WhatsApp. Prospective student teachers obtained information about vacancies through these forms of social media. Social media is communication through the above-mentioned platforms, mainly using cell phones. Burdge (2012) defined social media as the integration of technology with interaction sharing words, images, video and audio. In short, social media is conversations made easier, richer and more convenient (Burdge 2012). From these definitions, social media provides for interaction through the use of technology. Many participants used the WhatsApp platform as a source of information about vacancies. This platform represented a mediational tool that enabled subjects (in this case prospective students) to enact the object (student selection). This is exemplified by Student 25 in the individual interviews at College D who explained, *“I got the advertisement through social media WhatsApp platform. When I saw the advertisement, I applied.”* The participant suggested that WhatsApp became a mediational platform from where vacancy information was obtained. The WhatsApp platform could be either through the cell phone, tablet or computer. Messages on WhatsApp were either a photo of the actual advertisement or a written message informing the individual about the vacancies.

Social media as a source of vacancy information was also confirmed during a focus Group discussion at College B where Student 53 commented, *“I heard people talking about it on WhatsApp.”* People were sharing vacancy information on WhatsApp. Literature consulted (Gon and Rawekar 2017) indicates that WhatsApp is a teaching/learning tool, a free message application that works across multiple platforms. It is used widely among students to send multimedia messages like photos and videos with simple text messages. So as long as the internet is available the messages can be sent via this platform at no cost. Raima, Antbring and Mahood (2017) and Choudhury (2019) concur that WhatsApp promotes media sharing. In addition, the WhatsApp platform enables accessing diverse information and news such as vacancy information. According to Choudhury (2019) WhatsApp is becoming a major source of news in several countries. It is also a safe and secure platform where people can share personal information with no fear that it will leak (Choudhury 2019).

At College A during focus group discussion Student 26 said, *“About the advertisement, I was informed through WhatsApp, by a friend and then I applied.”* However, WhatsApp as a mediational tool was not popular at College A, as not many participants referred to it. The

reason for this low use of WhatsApp could probably be that this college is located in a rural setting where network was a common problem.

In College C the WhatsApp platform as a mediational tool for the provision of vacancy information was also mentioned by students during individual interviews. This is represented by Student 27 who said, *“My friend sent me a message through social media”* As WhatsApp was one of the common social media platforms, already alluded to above, it is possible that the message was through this platform. During focus group discussions the WhatsApp platform was mentioned most in Colleges B and D. This could mean that the rural population is lagging behind in terms of technology. From my observations of interview sessions, it was clear that the mission colleges were less developed technologically than the colleges in the urban government contexts. This is so because government sponsored colleges have the latest state of the art computers and laptops for use in the computer laboratories. The use of social media as a mediational tool in the provision of vacancy information was more pronounced in these government colleges. The WhatsApp platform as a mediational tool was common in the two government sponsored colleges.

From the evidence provided above, the newspaper, word of mouth and the WhatsApp platform are the three mediational tools that emerged as vital sources of information that played a role in making information known to prospective students. In the CHAT framework these were mediational tools used by the subjects (prospective students) to enact the object (obtaining vacancy information) in accordance with the rules of the community as expected by the division of labour.

5.6 Summary

With regards to Research Question One, about the mediational tools used in the selection of students into colleges, the mediational tools that emerged as being used by colleges in the selection of students were databases, SMS, written tests, interview schedules, interviews, print media, social media and word of mouth. The database was one of the mediational tools that was used to capture and store biographical information of candidates. The data could be retrieved in the future when needed. All participating students, lecturers and vice principals concurred that databases were in all colleges. I as the VP of one participating colleges and also the researcher, I concurred with other three VPs on the mediational tools used to select student

teachers. Evidence was from all data sources: individual interviews, focus group discussion and interview observation sessions.

Again, addressing Question One, written tests emerged as mediational tools which complemented oral interviews. However, only one college used them together with oral interviews to select student teachers into college. In the CHAT framework, this was a contradiction within the wider community because there was no uniformity across all colleges. The evidence was from all the data sources, including the individual interviews, focus group discussions and my interview observation sessions to confirm the use of written tests.

Other mediational tools identified were SMS messages. The SMS messages were used to invite candidates for selection interviews. The students, lecturers and vice principals concurred that SMS messages were sent from colleges and received by the applicants. This feature was common in all the teachers' colleges. This emerged through both individual interviews and focus group discussions. During interview observation sessions, I noted that all students displayed invitation messages before attending the interviews.

Other mediational tools were the interview schedules. The use of interview schedules was to ensure uniformity in questions asked and the order followed. The use of interview schedules was acknowledged among the lecturers and vice principals from all colleges. The main weakness associated with interview schedules was that questions and answers were shared among the candidates. This may have affected the quality of students that were recruited for teacher training. Strict and stern measures need to be taken to ensure questions are not shared among prospective students. To candidates it should be made clear that if one is found breaching rules of this nature, one is automatically disqualified. These measures may discourage such activities. The use of the interview schedules was common across all colleges.

All four colleges used the student selection interview as a mediational tool. Three colleges used the interview only to select students into colleges, while one college used both interviews and written tests. Some students expressed the view that oral interviews were not demanding. Interviews were preferred by students, lecturers and vice principals because they processed large numbers of students over a short period and assessed both academic and non-academic attributes.

Furthermore, the newspaper emerged as a popular source of vacancy information and a mediational tool. WhatsApp and word of mouth also emerged as sources of information. However, print media was the common source of information across all colleges and word of

mouth was the least preferred source of information in all colleges. In College D social media was the most mentioned source of information. This chapter discussed mediational tools and the next chapter focuses on the rules used to select students which is Research Question Two.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: RULES THAT GUIDE STUDENT TEACHER SELECTION INTO TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES

6.1 Introduction

The study as highlighted earlier sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in Zimbabwean teacher training colleges. For this particular chapter which addresses the rules that guided student selection, data were generated from students, selection committee members (lecturers) and vice principals and through interviews, focus group discussions and observation sessions. The previous chapter addressed Research Question One which examined the mediational tools used to select students into teacher education. This chapter addresses Research Question Two which is about the guidelines for student selection. The research question to be addressed reads: *what rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?* Broadly, in answer to this question, three themes – college guidelines for student selection, quality assurance and public service regulations – emerged as the rules that guided student selection into the teacher training colleges studied. While CHAT and the funnel theory were adopted for this study to unpack, understand and explain findings related to rules, in this chapter, they may not be consistently referred to in discussing rules.

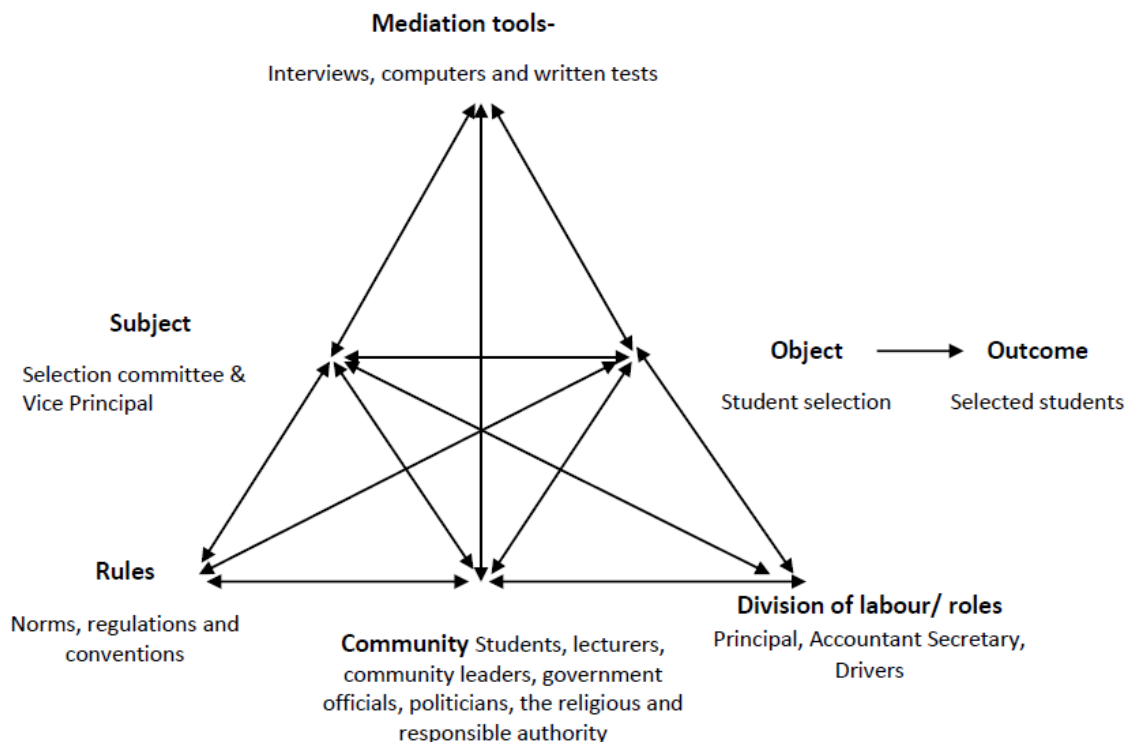
In presenting and analysing data in this chapter, I integrated responses from all the participants – students, selection committee members (lecturers), and vice principals – and from all data sources because the responses and observations were similar. However, where differences emerged these were highlighted.

6.2 College guidelines for student selection

With reference to the dynamics of entry into teacher education there were no ministry guidelines or policies that guided colleges. From a CHAT perspective, ministry guidelines or policies represent rules that guide student selection into teachers' colleges. The absence of ministry policy on student selection was clearly illustrated by Machingura (2006:33) who commented, "*Colleges in Zimbabwe are autonomous ... Recruitment of students for training is one of the areas that colleges handle. They do so by coming up with their own policies and*

arranging their own admission procedures.” Colleges have to develop their own rules and guidelines for student selection as there are no ministry policies on student selection for colleges to follow. In this study, in particular this chapter, college rules are called guidelines. Where rules are used in this chapter, they represent rules in the context of the CHAT framework where the rules guide performance of subjects and the community according to the division of labour (Trust 2017). According to Wilson (2014) rules define how subjects are expected to behave to enact the object to achieve the outcome. This is done in accordance with the rules of the community. Community, in this case, are all stake holders internal and external to the college who act according to the division of labour – according to the roles and responsibilities allocated to the different members within the community in this activity system on student selection (Engestrom 2004). The principals, responsible authorities, government officials, chiefs, lecturers, secretaries, parents and students all form the community. The activity system is represented in Figure 6.1 below. In the presentation and analysis, I draw on the CHAT framework as well as the funnel theory to explain my findings.

Figure 6.1: Representation of the CHAT Framework



Source: Adapted from Engestrom (2001)

Meanwhile, in the literature surveyed, the guidelines are comparable to selection criteria (Figuroa and Wittenberg 2015). Thus, with regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education in relation to college guidelines for student selection and in answer to the rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, in the absence of ministry policy colleges developed their own student selection rules, policies or guidelines. These were drawn from the Ministry entry requirements outlined in the advertisements for vacancies which were stipulated by Machingura (2006:35):

All that the Ministry does is to stipulate entry requirements which at the moment stand at 5 O level subjects at Grade C or better including English and Mathematics.

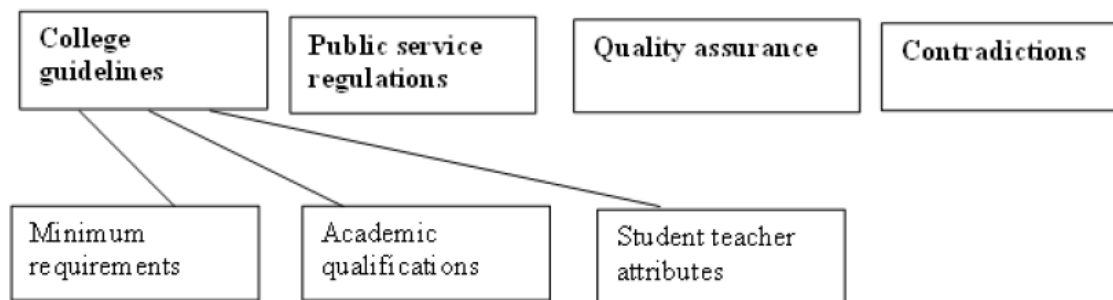
The concept of 5 O level subjects at Grade C or better has been succinctly summarised by Mukeredzi (2013) when she explained that secondary education in Zimbabwe was structured following the British Education system which had three stages. Stage One was the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate level obtained after two years of secondary education. This stage has since been abandoned. Then, at Stage Two candidates sat for Cambridge Ordinary Level Certificate examinations after four years of secondary education. It was the students with O level qualifications who were eligible for training as teachers. The third stage was the Cambridge Advanced Level Certificate obtained after six years of secondary education.

Thus, for entry into teacher education or other civil service professions the required minimum was five subjects at Grade C (50%) pass or higher to obtain an O-Level Certificate (Mukeredzi 2013). The core five subjects required for an individual to be eligible for entry into teacher education or any formal training included English, History, Mathematics, Science and a technical/vocational subject (Mukeredzi, 2013). The critical subjects which could not be substituted were English and Mathematics. The justification for these two subjects is provided in detail under minimum requirements in the section below. The other subjects could be substituted with Science, Geography, History, Shona, Ndebele or practical subjects. Therefore, 5 O level subjects meant English and Mathematics and any other three subjects. Whenever colleges and the ministry advertised for teacher training, the 5 minimum subjects were clearly stipulated as prerequisite for training. For student selection colleges checked to make sure that the candidate met this and other requirements.

The themes that emerged from the data on rules that guide student teacher selection into teachers' colleges – college guidelines for student teacher selection, quality assurance, public service regulations and contradictions – are reflected in Figure 6.2 below.

6.3 Themes and sub themes

Figure 6.2: Rules that guide student teacher selection and contradictions



Source: Researcher 2022

On college guidelines for student teacher selection, three sub-themes – minimum requirements, academic performance and student teacher attributes – were identified from the data. The theme College Guidelines and its sub-themes are discussed and summarised below.

6.3.1 Minimum requirements

In connection with the dynamics of entry into teacher education in relation to college guidelines and rules for student selection in teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe, one sub-theme that emerged was minimum requirements. Minimum requirements implied the cut off-point or the lowest level of acceptable education. These were the least expected standards for one to qualify for entry into a teacher training programme in Zimbabwe.

In relation to the rules that guide selection of students around college guidelines, explaining the minimum requirements for selection, the vice principal at College B commented, “*Like in our advertisement, the minimum requirements are 5 O Level passes including English, Mathematics and Science...*” In this case a candidate would not be considered for teacher training without 5 O level passes that included English, Mathematics and Science. The ministry stipulated that English and Mathematics were the critical subjects which could not be

substituted. Science was a recent addition in line with the STEM initiative. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Drawing from literature (The University of Texas, Arlington 2019) science education is one of the most important subjects in school due to its relevance to students' lives and the universally applicable problem-solving and critical thinking skills it develops in students. Problem-solving and critical thinking are lifelong skills that allow students to generate ideas, weigh decisions intelligently and even understand the evidence behind public policy making (The University of Texas, Arlington 2019). The value of learning Science lies in developing skills that will enable students to apply and solve scientific and technological world challenges. Therefore, minimum entry requirements was one of the rules that guided selection of students into teachers' colleges. Drawing on the theoretical framework for this study, CHAT, college guidelines represented the rules that gave direction to the subjects, the selection committees, to enact the object, student selection, to achieve the outcome, selected students, in line with the division of labour (Asghar 2013). The addition of Science in relation to CHAT was a contradiction because the selection committee added Science to the ministry's minimum requirement list of English and Mathematics, thus, breaching the community rule. That addition was not within division of labour. A secondary contradiction arose because tension occurred between the subject and rules including the division of labour and the community, thus, affecting more than two nodes (Jones 2014). Adding Science to the minimum requirements constrained the subject to enact the object thereby affecting the achievement of the outcome.

Similarly, responding to questions on the rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, the Vice Principal at College C said, "...*We advertise and indicate the minimum requirements for training.*" The participant-subject concurred with the Vice Principal-subject at College B that the minimum entry requirements were provided for students in the advertisement. Advertising for vacancies was through newspapers, as discussed in Chapter 5, and was aimed at creating awareness and interest in the Prospective students Stage 1 (Perna 2005). However, the participant did not state the actual and critical subjects included in the requirements: maybe this college just followed ministry stipulations unlike College B, which added Science. Meanwhile, the Vice Principal-subject at College D did not mention anything related to minimum requirements. Literature sourced in support of minimum requirements as guidelines for selecting students into teacher training (Brinkworth 2017) argued that a basic standard of entry is needed to maintain both quality and reputation. The quality of teacher and reputation of the programme and the institution could only be attained if a certain level of entry

requirements was upheld. Lowering the entry level would probably bring in less capable students leading to poor reputation of the programme.

On the issue of rules that guided selection of students into teachers' colleges Selection Committee Member A4 at College A said, "*The ministry sets the guidelines on the minimum requirements which are 5 O Level subjects including English and Mathematics....*" The participant-subject and the Vice Principal-subject at College B concurred with the ministry's minimum requirements on the two compulsory subjects English and Mathematics. However, the participant's comments differed from the Vice Principal's because the participant did not add Science. Viewing this from the CHAT framework this is a contradiction within the same node or element (subject), thus, a primary contradiction because the tension occurred within the same node (Joo 2014). Another selection committee member at College A did not add Science to the minimum requirements and, therefore, worked according to the division of labour. The United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF 2016), as well as the Government of Zimbabwe (1987), indicate that English language was included in the critical subjects in Zimbabwe because the language policy states that from Grade 4 English should be the medium of instruction provided that Shona or Ndebele are taught as subjects with equal time allocation. In support of the use of English, Chivhanga and Chinhenga (2013) argued that English is a global language used in socio-economic, cultural and geo-political matters. Furthermore, Chivhanga and Chinhenga (2013) argued that English is the gateway into employment in both the public and private sector. These reasons underline why English language was chosen as the language of instruction and a critical core subject for consideration for entry into the civil service professions.

With regards to Mathematics, Larson (2018) points out that this subject is necessary for employment and career readiness. Furthermore, Felton (2014) concurs with Larson when he argues that Mathematics is taught in schools to prepare for college and future careers, especially in Science, Technology, and Engineering which require mathematics.

Still discussing the dynamics of entry into teacher education under college guidelines for student selection into teachers' colleges in relation to minimum requirements, Selection Committee Member B3 at College B commented:

To begin with, we look at the advertisement which basically states the entry qualifications as 5 O Levels including English and Mathematics. Of late, we have been considering Science,

because of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) drive.

With regards to rules that guided the selection of students into teachers' colleges, Selection Committee Members A4, B3 and C1 concurred on the ministry requirements of 5 O Levels with English and Mathematics as the critical subjects. The participant-subject brought in the idea of the STEM drive to justify the consideration of Science for selection of students. The addition of the STEM drive emphasised the teaching of science subjects. Furthermore, Selection Committee Member B3 concurred with the Vice Principal at College B on minimum requirements in the advertisement for student selection. Inclusion of the unadvertised requirement of Science in the CHAT framework is a contradiction because the subject-selection committee considered Science for selection which was not advertised by the ministry, thus, breaking the minimum requirements rule and failing to work within the division of labour. The two statements were quite similar. This was not surprising because selection committee member B3 and the Vice Principal at College B were from the same college. However, the addition of Science was not advertised by the ministry, therefore, was not a requirement.

Drawing from literature surveyed, STEM is defined from two perspectives: STEM Education and STEM Workforce (Gerlach 2012). STEM Education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning where innovators, superstars and leaders of industry are groomed to join specialised and high technology fields. STEM Workforce deals with grooming workers with 21st century skills who are ready 'to jump right in' (Gerlach 2012). In Zimbabwe, STEM was introduced and used to select student teachers who would teach science subjects in schools. For Zimbabwe, teaching science subjects meant that this would increase innovation and industrialisation due to the creation of more technologists, engineers, scientists and mathematicians.

Under the theme of college guidelines for student selection and minimum requirements, in relation to the rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, Selection Committee Member D1 at College D commented:

The basic minimum entry requirement is 5 O level subjects including English and Mathematics. Two of those subjects must be taught in the primary schools. In addition, one must have an indigenous language.

What emerges from participant D1 regarding rules for selection related to minimum requirements is that the additional three subjects would be part of the primary school curriculum because this college was training primary school teachers and would include an

indigenous language. Apart from its socio-cultural value of enabling general communication and cultural continuity, indigenous language is an identity marker and ideological tool which contributes to national unity (Mukeredzi 2015; Resane 2016). The implications are that the teaching and learning of indigenous languages would be promoted in schools. Drawing from the CHAT theoretical framework the inclusion of an indigenous language was a contradiction because it was not in the ministry requirements and, therefore, not within the division of labour. The inclusion of minimum entry requirements in college rules was consistent with literature sourced, where the Ugandan government's Ministry of Education and Sports' Curriculum for Primary Teacher Education (2012) required a candidate for admission to the Grade Three Teacher's Certificate programme to have scored a minimum of six passes. Of the six passes two were English and Mathematics and the other two passes were in science subjects as per established categories. Drawing from the literature surveyed, countries that performed better than the United States of America in producing highly competent teachers seriously considered entry requirements (Anumaka, Mugenyi and Gaito 2017). This statement underlines the importance of entry qualifications in teacher training and, consequently, in determining the quality of teacher produced. The minimum entry qualifications set standards and controlled the quality of student teachers selected. Within the theoretical framework of CHAT, minimum requirements are an aspect of the rules guiding the subjects as they enact the object following stipulations of the community in accordance with the division of labour which may represent terms of reference (Wheeler 2020).

In conclusion, three vice principals at Colleges B, C and D concurred that they used minimum entry requirements to admit students. The difference was that the two church run Colleges A and C used the ministry advertised minimum compulsory subjects to select students while Colleges B and D added Science and an indigenous language to the compulsory subjects. Both are government colleges. All the selection committee members concurred that they used minimum entry requirements as student selection guidelines/standards. However, two selection committee members, B3 and D1, had additions of Science and an indigenous language to the compulsory subjects while the other two concurred with ministry requirements. Selection Committee Members A4 and D1 did not concur with their vice principals, which was a contradiction. During the selection interview observation sessions, I noted that Colleges A and C observed the minimum entry requirements but Colleges B and D made additions. These variations could be the result of the absence of ministry policy on student selection. Additions made to the minimum requirements from a CHAT perspective constitute contradictions

because they were not advertised by the ministry and, therefore, did not fall within the division of labour.

This section discussed the minimum entry requirements as rules for student selection into teacher education programmes. The next sub-theme under college guidelines is academic performance.

6.3.2 Academic performance

With regards to the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges, another rule that was used by the colleges to select students into teacher education was academic performance. Academic performance in this context refers to grades, or symbols, which applicants obtained at O level in each subject, which is reflected the number of As, Bs, or Cs. These grades are shown on academic certificates. Selection committee members checked those grades on academic certificates. To illustrate how colleges made use of academic performance, the Vice Principal at College B said, "...scoring academic certificate scores, enables us to determine the cutoff point." The term 'scoring' refers to allocating marks to the O level grades that were reflected on the certificates: for instance, A was usually allocated 7 points, B was allocated 5 points, C was allocated 3, D was allocated 1 and F for fail was not allocated any points (Selection Committee Minutes 2018). Scoring, thus, provided marks to be used for selection. The academic certificates provided evidence of academic performance. In support of the use of academic performance, William (2019) argues that people considered grades first when defining academic performance. According to Mukeredzi (2013) the symbols were aligned to the Cambridge Ordinary Level Certificate following four years of secondary education. From the theoretical framework of CHAT, academic performance was seen as a rule used by the subjects to enact on the object to achieve the intended outcome (Joo 2014). During the selection interview observation sessions students with high symbols such as As and Bs were selected first.

Still referring to the dynamics of entry into teacher education under college guidelines for student selection around academic performance under rules that guide selection of students into teachers' colleges, the Vice Principal at College C pointed out:

To assess the performance of candidates we assess the number of sittings, the number of passes, the number of As, Bs and Cs. We do not consider "A" level as an added advantage. We select those candidates

with one sitting first, then those with two sittings and with better passes. Marks from the interviews and marks from the certificates, symbols are added to get the final mark for each candidate. Usually those with high final marks are given or will get first priority.

The expression ‘to assess’ implied to evaluate the passes, or to determine the number of sittings by counting the number of certificates. A sitting represented a single examination session where one would get a certificate. In this context sitting was the number of times a candidate wrote O Level examinations to attain the required five O Level subjects. A Level qualification was not considered but was an added advantage because it was not a requirement for teacher training. However, such candidates often scored higher because selection into A Level often required students who had attained As and Bs at O Level. As a VP, the use of number of sittings as one of the rules to select student teachers was not common in colleges, most colleges preferred the use of higher symbols.

From the quotation pertaining to the dynamics of entry into teacher education under related college guidelines for student selection the applicant’s grades and number of sittings were the critical aspects considered for academic performance. There was concurrence in what Colleges B and C’s Vice Principals said in terms of combining marks from performance in the interviews and academic performance to select students for teacher training. Only College C considered the number of sittings to select students into college. Within the CHAT framework, considering the number of sittings to select students into colleges was a contradiction because this was not a requirement and not advertised by the ministry and, hence, worked against the community rules. With regards to sittings, literature surveyed revealed that, for example, in Nigeria, entry requirements of at least five O level subjects should be obtained at no more than two sittings in the West African Certificate Examination or its equivalent (Amasuomo 2014). However, literature remains divided over the use of academic performance. Holden and Kitchen (2017) argued that while academic performance is commonly used, it is not universally accepted as a measurement because it overlooks the applicant’s verbal and interpersonal qualities. Byrne and Challen (2004) found that there is a contradictory relationship between academic performance and future teaching performance. Zimbabwe’s view of academic performance is that it is the most common factor considered by many people because all colleges used it to select students. The colleges seem to view it as synonymous with completing the teacher education programme but not with teaching efficiency.

Viewing this in the CHAT framework, using academic performance was here viewed as one of the rules used by the subjects as was required by the community to select students into teacher training colleges in accordance with the division of labour (Yamagata-Lynch 2010).

Sharing the same sentiments on the dynamics of entry into teacher education under college guidelines for student selection and academic performance relating to the rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, the Vice Principal at College D said, "*Like I said before, we are basing it on the grades and marks obtained in the oral interview, written test and marks from the O Level qualifications.*" The participant concurred with the other two Vice Principals that academic performance was considered in the selection of students. Similarities with the other two quotations were that colleges compiled the final mark from the interview performance and O level grades on the certificate. However, the difference was that the participant added a written test mark. This was because College D administered written tests over and above the interview and the O level passes. This may be because as colleges were autonomous (Machingura 2006) it was at their discretion to incorporate other forms of assessment to enhance student selection. The lack of student selection policy was a contradiction emanating from the ministry's not providing guidelines for student selection, which resulted in variations in rules for student selection across colleges.

Regarding the discussion on the dynamics of entry into teacher education around college guidelines and academic performance as a rule that guides the selection of students into teachers' colleges, all three vice principals concurred that academic performance was used to select students into teachers' colleges. However, the Vice Principal at College D added written test scores to the interview and O level grades. Adding written test scores may be viewed as a contradiction in the CHAT framework as it was the only college using written tests of the four institutions explored. This may have been because colleges were autonomous to come up with whatever guidelines to enhance student selection given the dynamics of entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe. In the CHAT perspective, observing academic performance represents rules of the activity system used by the subjects (selection committee members and vice principals) to enact the object (student selection) to achieve the outcome as is expected by the community in accordance with the division of labour (Foot 2014). Scores, tests and interview marks are mediation tools in CHAT.

The next section examines the academic performance rule from the perspective of selection committee members.

Confirming academic performance in relation to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, college guidelines for student selection around academic performance with reference to the rules for selection of students in teachers' colleges, Selection Committee Member A2 during interviews at College A said, "...*The selection committee looks at those who passed very well O Level and those who have A Levels....*" The participant suggested that high grades were used to select students for teacher training. Candidates who passed O Levels very well were selected probably because they were better positioned to complete the teacher training programme and would be proficient as teachers. In this regard the participant concurred with the vice principals on the use of this rule of academic performance to select students. However, considering those with A Levels marked a difference from the vice principals. In Zimbabwe the number of A grades in a particular course of O Level study like Science, Commerce, Arts determines whether one can proceed to A Level. 5 O level subjects with A grades was enough to take one for A Level studies as explained above. This was probably the reason why those candidates with A Levels were selected. However, selecting candidates with A Levels was a contradiction because A Level qualifications were not a requirement for entry into teacher education. Drawing from literature the use of academic performance to select students for teacher training was consistent with world trends as expressed by Amasuomo (2014) who argued that tertiary institutions all over the world, including Nigeria, use prior academic performance in terms of admission points or different entry qualifications/certificates as a basis for selecting students for admission into colleges of education, polytechnic schools and universities. In Nigeria, academic qualification for admission into colleges of education was a passing mark in at least five subjects, including English, Mathematics and two different science subjects (Amasuomo 2014). These qualifications were at Senior Secondary School Certificate level. This suggests that teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe were aligned to international standards on the use of academic performance in selecting college students.

The use of academic performance in the dynamics of entry into teacher education was vividly illustrated by college guidelines for student selection related to academic performance as a rule that guided selection into teachers' colleges. Selection Committee Member B1 during interviews at College B explained:

Then, after capturing their interview marks, we look at their certificates. What did they get in Mathematics, English and Science? We want to see their academic profile's contribution to the final mark. For O level, we allocate 7 for an A, 5 points for a B, 3 points for a C, 2

points for a D, 1 point for an E and 0 for an F. We consider the best five subjects. Of course, we are going to credit A level subjects. An A will be given 5, B =4, C=3, D=2 and E=1. The academic score is 40 and interview score is 60, making a total mark of 100 when the two are added.

The participant suggested they used academic scores and interview scores as mediation tools to select students. The allocation of points was probably done to identify high achievers academically. Candidates who emerged with high points were then selected for teacher training. However, like A2 in College A above, the use of the A Level qualification was a contradiction given that the ministry's minimum requirements did not include A Level qualifications. At the same time, the use of academic criteria as principal selection criteria into initial teacher education was challenged by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2011). The reason cited was that academic demand discouraged young people with poor qualifications from entering teaching and attracted people with high academic grades, while those with poor grades were not likely to go into more demanding professions (OECD 2011). This suggests that applicants with low grades were overshadowed by those with high grades. They were left with limited choice because they could not compete in other more challenging professions. In the U.S.A. academic performance was measured by the final grades earned in the senior secondary school diploma course, for instance, a minimum of 3.00 grade point average (GPA) was used to admit student teachers into teacher education (William 2019). In Zimbabwe O Levels were completed over four years. In addition to heightening the high grades for student selection into teacher education, grades generally carried more weight when hiring for employment and for scholarship purposes. However, grades were less important in training for other industries like creative arts and sales because they looked for skills (William 2019). The literature survey confirms that student selection processes would benefit from attending more to prospective teacher candidates' academic credentials (Hirschhorn et al. 2017). This means that if colleges awarded more points for O level academic performance, the colleges and receiving ministry would benefit from more efficient and proficient teachers. This may be due to an understanding that by selecting students with good academic records, the colleges would not waste resources as no student would be likely to fail and quality teachers were likely to be produced from students with high qualifications. The receiving ministry would benefit from quality education provided by quality teachers produced. This was not true for College B which allocated only 40 out of the possible 100 to academic performance. In the

theoretical framework CHAT, academic performance stands for the rules that guided selection by the subjects as expected by the community in accordance with the division of labour (Asghar 2013). While, the participant here considered academic performance as a college rule, at College C during individual interviews, Selection Committee Member C1 viewed the same rule from a slightly different angle, commenting:

Yes, there will be so many applications, so we have to select a few for the interviews. We look at their passes. We agree as the selection committee on the number of As, Bs and Cs to invite. If there are fewer candidates with As and Bs, then take those with Cs until we have enough candidates for the interviews.

The phrase, ‘look at their passes’ implies that they counted the number of As, Bs and Cs for each candidate. Counting the symbols for each candidate ensured that only the most capable academically were selected.

Still with regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, college guidelines for student selection related academic performance as a rule that guided the selection of students into teachers’ colleges. Selection Committee Member at College D said, “*We check for the five O Level subjects.*” The participant concurred with three other members on the use of O level subjects to select students. The participant concurred with vice principals on the use of academic performance to select students. The use of academic performance is consistent with literature, as illustrated by Matthews (2018) who argues that academic achievement is and should be one of the criteria for college admission because it is relevant to evaluating the likelihood of success for the student or candidate. Brinkworth (2017) argues that shifting the focus away from academic attainment at admission stage risks misleading applicants. This suggests that academic performance is certainly one of the cognitive variables which needs to be considered when admitting students. In the CHAT framework academic performance represents a rule which guides subjects and the marks themselves are mediation tools to enact the object within the requirements of the community in accordance with the division of labour (Foot 2014). However, Alderman and Mitchel (2016) argue that academic qualifications at selection are no guarantee of good quality teachers. This implies that we cannot identify a great teacher on the basis of his/her resume.

From the evidence provided on the dynamics of entry into teacher education related to college guidelines for student selection, all vice principals and selection committee members concurred

that academic performance formed an important part of the rules for teachers' colleges. However, the Vice Principal at College D added the written test score to the academic score. Written test as a mediational tool was discussed in detail in the previous chapter. In addition, the selection committee members from church sponsored Colleges A and C considered A Level qualifications as the selection criterion. This was, however, a contradiction because it was not advertised by the ministry and was not one of the community rules. In the selection interview observation sessions, I noticed that all colleges used high academic symbols to select students into teacher training colleges. Student teacher attributes discussed in the next section also emerged as a rule for guiding student selection into teachers' colleges.

6.3.3 Student teacher attributes

With regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education within the college guidelines for student selection, student teacher attributes emerged as another rule for selection of students into teachers' colleges. The issue of student teacher attributes emerged in Colleges B and C. However, there was no concurrence on the use of student teacher attributes in the other two colleges. Explaining student teacher attributes, the Vice Principal at College B said:

Yes, selection is guided by the candidate's motivation to become a teacher, we check for communication skills, checking on knowledge of educational issues and system and to see their dress because these are joining the profession. So, these issues guide us as who to select.

As a VP at College A, different colleges used different student teacher attributes to select students for teacher education. From the quotation above, one of the rules used to select students in College B was motivation to become a teacher. This suggested the passion, zeal or the innate drive in the candidate to become a teacher. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning and driving force to sustain it (Khansir 2017). Thus, motivation is the key to instilling a positive school climate by changing the culture of learning and teaching (Mtsetfwa 2006). Amutan (2014) notes that motivation is the individual force that accounts for the direction, level and persistence of a person's effort expended at work. Thus, self-drive was chosen as a rule to select students because the inside ambition was natural, in-born and would not die easily. Therefore, teacher educators selected student teachers who demonstrated this self-drive during the selection interview.

It appeared that College B chose to include non-cognitive attributes in their guidelines for student selection. With regards to the use of non-cognitive attributes, Holden and Kitchen (2017) argue that teacher educators favour non-cognitive qualities and select aspects which are often criticised for being unable to objectively assess applicants' non-cognitive abilities. Non-cognitive abilities are difficult to measure although they were popular with teacher educators at College B in selecting students for teacher training. This concurs with OECD (2011) discussed above which pointed out that requirements for academic performance discouraged young people with poor qualification from entering teaching. The use of non-cognitive qualities would assist those students with poor qualification to be selected.

With regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education under the theme of college guidelines for student selection and in answer to the rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, communication skills were another rule that was considered in selecting students into teachers' colleges. Communication skills are the ability to convey and share information to others in an efficacious way (Reddy 2019; Khan and Islam 2017; Crotty 2014). Khan and Islam (2017) note that a teacher with good communication skills strengthens the relationship among the students and teacher by improving the level of understanding among teacher and students. Each teacher candidate was expected to demonstrate the ability to articulate ideas or issues eloquently as teacher professional practice involves explaining concepts and ideas to learners. It would be difficult to express issues in the absence of such interaction skills. Reviewed literature (Rawat 2015) points out that communication plays a vital role in the transfer of knowledge. This is so because the success of the teaching and learning process depends on the teacher's knowledge and ability to transfer the same to students. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2000) supports the need to have communication skills such as verbal ability by explaining that teachers' verbal ability is related to student achievement and is a sensitive measure of teachers' abilities to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways. In this light communication skills, are crucial for all student teachers selected.

Still discussing the dynamics of entry into teacher education in relation to student teacher attributes some knowledge of the education system also emerged as one of the rules that guided the selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges. The candidate was to be knowledgeable of the structure of the education ministry and current issues in the sector. It was important for candidates to show interest in issues that related to the field into which they were going. Another important aspect of the college guidelines for student selection related to dress

code. Professional attire is necessary to limit distraction. It commands respect and sets an example of professionalism to students (Joseph 2017). Kashem (2019) contends that choice in clothing can communicate responsibility, status, power and the ability to be successful. While both dress and students' attitudes are important factors that increase weight on students' learning, too much emphasis on dress may draw learners' attention from the essential issues of learning. Learners may waste a lot of time admiring their smart and elegantly dressed teacher instead of concentrating on their school work. Dress is important because the teacher is a model for all the students that pass through him/her. From literature sources Catapano (2019) points out that teachers are role models for their students so when teachers dress professionally it sends an important message to students. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Public Service Commission through circular 10 of 2006, replacing general letter number 16 of 1980, stipulates the dress code for men – “*dress must include collar and tie...*” (Mananavire 2017:1) – And for women. In part the dress code for the latter read: “*despite the complexity of women's fashions, women should put on a correspondingly high standard of dress*” (Mananavire 2017:1). Members of the civil service are required to uphold the dignity and formality expected of them (Mananavire 2017). This was the reason College B used the dress code as one of the rules to select student teachers.

Referring to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, college guidelines around student teacher attributes, College B considered four qualities of a teacher in their selection: motivation, good communication skills, knowledge of the education system and educational issues and personal appearance. From the vice principals, only College B used student teacher attributes to guide selection of students into college. This could be because colleges were autonomous as alluded to earlier on. The other two vice principals did not mention the inclusion of attributes in the rules.

Again, with reference to student teacher attributes as rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges, Selection Committee Member B1 at College B confirmed these attributes arguing:

... First, they must be able to express themselves. They must be able to express an idea when they talk. They must have the ability to articulate a point even one's personal background. Self-expression and sustaining one's argument are needed here. That is one quality of a teacher.

Selection Committee Member C2 argued:

We also allocate marks for other attributes to find out whether a student is honest, trustworthy and time conscious.

Similarly, addressing rules guiding the selection of students into teachers' colleges, college guidelines for student selection related to student teacher attributes, all selection committee members at College C acknowledged the use of teacher attributes as a rule to guide the selection of students. With reference to the second quotation above, honesty is also about being trustworthy, loyal, fair and sincere (Rashid 2019). Drawing from surveyed literature, Evans (2002) cited by Leblanc and Gallavan (2009) found honest and trustworthy as appropriate dispositions to enable teachers to initiate student learning. The need for a combination of academic and non-cognitive qualities to produce a balanced teacher as implied by C2 is further supported by Leblanc and Gallavan (2009) who argue that the best teachers are not only competent in their subject matter, but also exhibit favourable dispositions as primary qualifications of successful educators. This further suggests why teachers' beliefs and dispositions are important to improve educational outcomes for all their students. However, Leblanc and Gallavan (2009) and Rockoff (2004) acknowledge that dispositions are difficult to assess as they cannot be identified through mediation tools. Stronge and Hindman (2003) argue that teacher quality has a lasting effect on student learning and Rockoff (2004) and Goldhaber and Antony (2003) contend that teacher quality has the largest impact on student achievement. This implies that teacher quality determines student outcomes and attributes like honesty and trustworthiness are important for building up the right personality in the community. However, these teacher attributes take time to develop. Colleges chose to use honesty and trustworthiness to select students into college because the two characteristics influence student achievements.

Time consciousness relates to sense of time or the measurement of someone's perception of duration (Robin 2016). Time consciousness ensures that lessons start and finish on time, hence, it determines the effectiveness of teaching. It impacts negatively if learners come late as this disturbs both teacher and learners (Mtsefwa 2006). Time conscious motivates students to be committed to work and disciplined and this helps in the achievement of set goals, Mtsefwa further argues. Hence, it is used to select students into teachers' colleges.

The Vice Principal at College B was the only one who acknowledged the use of student teacher attributes in selecting students. The other two Vice Principals did not. From the selection committee members, it was those at Colleges B and C who used student teacher attributes to

select students into teachers' colleges. Similarities in the use of student teacher attributes were only found between Vice Principal B and Selection Committee Member B1.

With reference to the dynamics of entry into teacher education and rules that guided student selection into teachers' colleges in relation to student teacher attributes, Colleges B and C adopted this aspect. Student teacher attributes used as guidelines to select students into these colleges were motivation, dress code, self-expression, articulateness, honesty, trustworthiness and time consciousness. The student teacher attributes served to underline the importance of non-cognitive abilities in the selection of students into teachers' colleges. From CHAT, all the student teacher attributes represented the rules followed by the subjects to enact the object to achieve the outcome in accordance with the division of labour (Joo 2014).

While Colleges B and C used student attributes to select students, Colleges A and C used public service regulations.

6.3.4 Public service regulations

Given the dynamics of entry into teacher education, in relation to rules that guide student selection into teachers' colleges, Colleges A and C used Public Service Regulations as guidelines. This was exemplified by Selection Committee Member C4 at College C during the individual interview, who commented:

We are guided by the Public Service Regulations that we need to be fair and transparent. We consider students from areas previously marginalised, parts like Binga and Malipati. Those areas are inhabited by the Tonga and Shangani people.

And Selection Committee Member A4 at College A said:

We look again at our advertisement for the specifics. We are guided by the Public Service Regulations which states that for a vacant post at least three people should contest.

The Public Service Regulations Statutory Instrument: 1 of 2000 (Zimbabwe government 2000) referred to was used as a guide for student selection. This was in contrast to the attributes used in College B. The value of the regulations was meant to ensure uniformity in selecting students. In the CHAT framework, regulations are the rules that shape participation and govern the

selection process (De Beer and Mentz 2017). Fair selection creates a good reputation for the college as the applicants from ‘marginalised’ communities stand a better chance of being selected. The United Nations Educational Scientific-Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2018) defines marginalisation as leaving many people behind through national policies, denying them education. It appeared as if the two areas mentioned were so remote, that people from those areas were often left behind through national policies and marginalisation. Mukeredzi and Nyachowe (2018) view marginalised contexts as denoting under-class conceptions, which describe such contexts within social development models, which suggests social disadvantage to the people in reference. Such inhabitants are usually socially excluded partly or fully from active participation in national majority socio-political and decision-making activities. This college attempted to give particular attention to the two areas. People from these areas spoke minority languages: Tonga and Shangani respectively. This is supported by Goldstein (2010) when she says that most of the girls who were excluded in India, were from remote areas and spoke minority languages. As such public service regulations would probably help to ensure a fair and transparent student selection process into teachers’ colleges. Within the theoretical framework of CHAT public service regulations were the rules used to guide subjects in the action on the object to achieve the outcome as stipulated by the community within the division of labour (Trust 2014).

With regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, in particular the rules used to select students into teachers’ colleges and college guidelines for student selection, only selection committee members at College A and one at C referred to public service regulations. There were differences in the rules used to select students from college to college and within colleges, like at College C where Selection Committee Member C4 considered public service regulations and marginalisation while Selection Committee Member C2 used attributes like honesty and trustworthiness to select students into college. Meanwhile, Selection Committee Member C3 revealed using number of sittings to select students into college. Selection Committee Member C1 concurred with the Vice Principal at College C on the use of symbols like number of As, Bs and Cs.

Public Service Regulations also emerged as one of the rules. During interview observation sessions, I observed that committee members at College A and one selection committee member at College C used public service regulations. Therefore, in relation to rules used to select students into teachers’ colleges, public service regulations were used as guidelines for student selection. The CHAT proponents view guidelines as the rules that guide subjects to

enact the object to eventually achieve the outcome using mediation tools (Scheckle 2014). Another theme that emerged from the data as a rule to guide student selection into teachers' colleges was quality assurance.

6.3.5 Quality assurance

With regard to the dynamics of entry into teacher education with particular reference to rules that guide the selection of students into teachers' colleges quality assurance also emerged. Quality assurance is the means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced (Friend-Pereira, Lutz and Heerens 2002). In the context of this study, this implies measures or steps taken by colleges to ensure that the student selection process was transparent. The concept of quality assurance has been defined as the collection of policies, procedures, systems and practices, internal or external to the organization, designed to achieve, maintain and enhance quality (Williams 2016). Both definitions concur that the purpose of quality assurance is to ensure that processes meet and satisfy expected standards. In this study there were no ministry policies: the colleges developed their own policies. In the same vein, Olojede (2010) argues that quality assurance is necessary because of the emergence of many higher institutions and increasing access to higher education. Hence, there is need to control standards, i.e., the quality of learning and quality of course delivery. Mukeredzi and Ndamba (2007) in Dodo (2013) refer to quality control as operational techniques and activities employed to fulfill requirements for quality. In this study quality control implies activities/processes by the selection committee members and vice principals, like checking, monitoring and reviewing student selection to see if it meets the required standards. The activities of checking, monitoring and reviewing outcomes were conducted to identify problems and weaknesses of the system. This relates to what Vice Principal B at College B explained:

Every interview stage or process will be under the supervision of the Head of Department, checking and cross-checking the tallies of the scores, so that there is no thump stamping.

Supervision was defined as working through others and with others in order to achieve school goals (Ojo 2007). The Heads of departments' ensured quality was maintained by checking academic certificates for the five O level subjects, including verifying that English and Mathematics were among the required subjects, as well as ensuring correct addition of

individual scores. Adegbesan (2011) and Ojo (2007) concur that supervision guarantees quality and is one of the steps of quality assurance and a good tool for quality assurance. Brouwer (2010) argues that it depends on the dispositions and capabilities of the academic staff. This implies that if academic staff consist of capable people, then quality assurance is guaranteed and the reverse is true. Although only one college highlighted the supervision of the Head of Department, all colleges had similar structures to ensure quality of the process was maintained. These structures were observed during the interview observation sessions.

With reference to the dynamics of entry into teacher education and in response to the rules that guide student selection into teachers' colleges, related to quality assurance the Vice Principal from College D explained:

When students are invited, we no longer use names. They are identified by numbers. They use the numbers when taking the written test and during the oral interviews. This is the blind that makes it difficult to know who is who in the mix of numbers and figures. We believe that in this way, we are fair.

From the enrollment funnel stages, students are invited for interviews at Stage 3 Applicants when the decision to apply at an institution had been made (Zinn and Johansson 2014). Anonymity eliminated both conscious and unconscious biases of the selection committee, thus, assuring selection processes' impartiality. Anonymity ensured the protection of staff from accusations of unfairness and discrimination and contributed to professional obligations of fairness, as well as promoting quality. Surveyed literature contends that the benefit of anonymous marking is that it removes bias or personal feelings and pre-judged expectations of student performance (Whitelegg 2002). Other researchers (Pitt and Winstone 2018; Baird 1998) revealed that anonymous marking did not seem to advantage or disadvantage particular groups of students in terms of grade outcome, which suggests fairness. Anonymous marking, thus, served to ensure transparency in the selection interview. There was no uniformity across colleges on rules to follow for student selection, which was a contradiction. According to Machingura (2006), colleges were autonomous: they were free to decide what they wanted. While anonymity was likely to result in credible selection processes in colleges, some literature reveals disadvantages. For example, Hinton and Higson (2017) contend that anonymous marking is costly for institutions to implement because of the required training to increase assessors' awareness of their own potential unconscious biases. In the CHAT framework

anonymity represents a rule for enacting the object selection process (Joo 2014). From the four colleges only one used numbers to ensure transparency.

In addition to keeping applicants anonymous and with reference to quality assurance, the Vice Principal at College C said:

Because we follow the guidelines set by the academic board, each panel rates the candidates. From each panel we calculate the ratio. For example, from a panel with seventy candidates, we may decide to take the top seven. So the process is very transparent.

In the Zimbabwean context, teachers' colleges have an academic board which is called the Associate College Centre academic board which comprises all college principals, representatives from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and technology development and university representatives. The same structure existed at each college where the principal chaired the college academic board which comprised of senior administrators, heads of departments and lecturers in charge of learning sections/subjects. Drawing from literature the academic board is the peak body responsible for assuring academic quality and ensuring academic integrity and high standards in teaching and learning. It is also responsible for formulating and reviewing policies, guidelines and procedures in relation to academic matters (Temmerman 2016). This, therefore, justified why the Vice Principal used the guidelines from the academic board in the student selection process. The participant argued that because they calculated the ratio of the highest interview performers, which they would take from each panel of interviewers, the process was fair. If, for instance, they agreed to take the highest twenty candidates from each panel, then this would apply to all the panels so it was fair and clear to all. For instance, if the college had 600 vacancies and 20 panels, then the ratio of the vacancies to panels was 600:20. This would translate into 30:1 when reduced to the smallest terms. This meant that a total of 30 students would be selected from each panel. From the CHAT perspective the vice principal used calculations (tools) to ensure quality assurance in the student selection process and, subsequently, to achieve the outcome. Calculating the ratio of the highest interview performers ensured that equal numbers of candidates were selected from each panel every interview day. This procedure was in line with the academic board guidelines. The department of higher education (2015) South Africa defined academic board as the body responsible for all the teaching, learning, research and academic functions of the college. Literature surveyed in relation to Singapore indicates that teacher candidates are

selected from the best 30% of the secondary school graduates by panels including principals (Figuena and Wittenberg 2015). Although they looked similar in the way they selected students, the difference was in the selection criteria, where the best 30% of secondary school graduates were selected. From the enrollment funnel theory, all secondary school graduates formed Prospective students which is Stage One of the student journey towards enrollment (Zinn and Johansson 2015). From the CHAT theoretical framework calculating the ratio from each panel represents tools used by subjects to ensure quality assurance was guaranteed in student selection to achieve the outcome as expected by the community in accordance with the division of labour (Yamagata-Lynch 2010). My views as one of the Vice Principals were that the use of rules stipulated by the academic board ensured that high standard of teaching and learning were maintained in colleges.

With reference to the dynamics of entry into teacher education related to rules that guide student selection in teachers' colleges around quality assurance, vice principals indicted that transparency was ensured through stage by stage supervision by Heads of Department at College B, the use of numbers by candidates in place of names when taking the written and oral interviews at College D and calculating the ratio from each panel at College C. From the quotations all participants took measures that promoted quality assurance and transparency. In connection with transparency, the second guiding principle used by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL 2015) indicates the need for transparency and this shows how the issue of transparency was taken by other countries with regards to the guiding principles. Zimbabwe was comparable to the rest of the world because they also ensure that there is transparency in their selection guidelines. During the interview observation sessions, I was able to observe numbers allocated to candidates to keep them anonymous. This evidence bears testimony that quality assurance was used as a guide for the selection of students. Drawing from the theoretical framework of CHAT, quality assurance represented a rule used by subjects to enact the object to achieve the outcome (Gedera and Williams 2013). However, in response to all the requirements stated above, Alderman and Mitchel (2016) argue that all these requirements – including a minimum of five O Levels, tests, interviews, minimum GPA and SAT scores – do not guarantee effective teachers but are barriers to entry into teacher education or new ways to keep potential teachers out of schools. Admission criteria are the first barrier for most teacher candidates.

6.4 Contradictions in the students' selection processes

With reference to the dynamics of entry into teacher education and, in particular, reference to rules guiding the selection of students into teachers' colleges, a number of contradictions emerged. According to Weibell (2011), contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems. Mukeredzi (2009) suggests that contradictions are understood to imply diversion from expected norms and practices. In this discussion, contradictions are differences of opinion that may lead to tensions, clashes or acting wrongly deliberately. This section discusses contradictions related to rules that guided the selection of students into teachers' colleges. As a normal practice all colleges were expected to follow the ministry's advertised minimum requirements of five O level subjects including English and Mathematics. However, in the discussions with selection committee members divergent views related to guidelines used emerged. For example, at College A, Selection Committee Member A2 said, *'The selection committee looks at those who passed very well 'O' Level and those who have 'A' levels....'* Selection Committee Member A2 expressed that they considered candidates with A Levels. This was a contradiction as A Level was not a Ministry requirement for teacher training and it was not part of the advertisements. This was a secondary contradiction because conflict was between two or more nodes (Jones 2014) and as such multiple contradictions played out. First, subject/rule contradiction played out as the subject failed to implement the rule accurately. Second, subject/division of labour contradiction played out as the subject failed to execute their division of labour appropriately. Third, subject/community contradiction played out as the subject disadvantaged some community members. Fourth, subject/object contradiction played out as enacting was based on an inaccurate rule. Subject related contradictions are shown below in Figure 5.

6.4.1 Contradictions that emerged

Related to considering A Level graduates, College B triggered another contradiction by adding Science to the basic requirements of English and Mathematics. Selection committee member B2 said, *'All applications are captured in the database. Then there is some sifting to identify those with no Science, Mathematics and English. These will be put aside. They will be out of the race.'* The addition of Science as stated by the selection committee member was a secondary contradiction because from the ministry requirements and the advertisements that

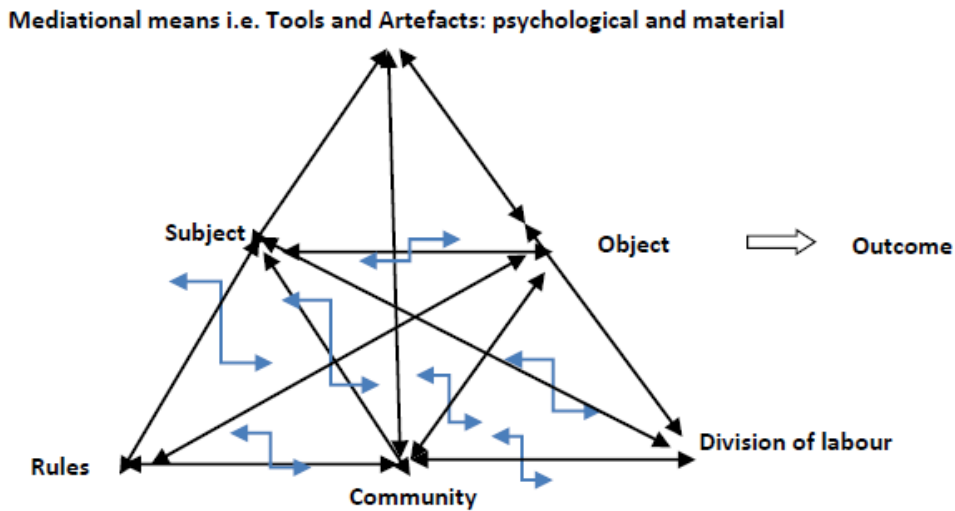
had not been included. Science was not indicated as a compulsory or critical subject which could not be replaced. More than two nodes were involved, including subject/division of labour contradiction played out due to subject failure to perform their duty following ministry requirements and the advert. Applicants with no science were disadvantaged. Subject/rule contradiction also played out due to noncompliance with rules by the subject. Subject/object contradiction played out due to failure by the subject to enact the object and subsequently achieve the outcome of the activity. This was a contradiction involving the subject's diverting from the community rule, allocated by the division of labour, and not enacting the object as stipulated. This is in support of Mukeredzi's (2009) definition of contradictions that they are understood to imply diversion from the expected norms and practices.

Two more contradictions played out at College D. First, indigenous languages were added to the requirements for entry into teachers' colleges. Selection Committee Member D1 illustrated the addition of an indigenous language by commenting, *'Rules, like I indicated before, as a college we agreed that one must have an indigenous language which is being taught in the schools.'* The ministry requirements did not include indigenous languages in the critical subject areas and the requirement was not advertised. Hence, that addition was a difference in opinion from other colleges, a diversion from the norms and practice (Mukeredzi 2009) and, therefore, a secondary contradiction because conflict was between two or more nodes (Kirk and Per Nilsen 2016). In this case, subject/rule contradiction plays out due to failure by the subject to abide by the rules and, then, subject/division of labour contradiction plays out due to failure by subjects to perform their roles according to the division of labour stipulations. Secondly, contradiction played out at College D when the written test component was added to the oral interviews. The Vice Principal at College D pointed out, *'There are two main processes. First, there is a 30-minute written test.'* The use of a written test to select students into a teachers' college showed a marked difference from other colleges. This was a clear diversion from the normal practice of the oral interviews and was, again, a secondary contradiction. The contradiction played out as follows: first, subject/rule contradiction plays out due to non-compliance to rules by the subject. Secondly, subject/division of labour contradiction plays out due to failure by the subject to work according to the division of labour. In all three colleges a common contradiction emerged as the subject deviated from the rules and did not work according to division of labour in each case.

Besides contradictions related to the rules guiding student selection into teachers' colleges, there were also contradictions that were related to how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies.

6.4.2 Community related contradictions

Figure 6. 3: Mediational means: tools and artefacts: psychological and material



Source: Adopted from Engestrom 1999

In answer to how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies, under the theme of contradictions but in contrast to the above selection committee members, Selection Committee Member A1 at College A added:

Thirdly, members of staff may assist their relatives to get good marks. Students come for three days. On the first day, marks obtained are low because students are not yet familiar to the questions. On subsequent days, students tend to score very high since they already know the questions.

Two contradictions emerged from the above quotation. One contradiction plays out when members of staff award their relatives undue marks to ensure that they qualify for selection because this falls short of the normal practice or rules. This practice was against the roles and duties allocated by the division of labour. In this case, three dimensions of secondary contradictions emerged. The community/rules contradiction played out due to the community's failure to abide by the rules. The community/division of labour contradiction played out due to the community's failure to perform roles and duties allocated by the division of labour to enable

the subject to act on the object efficiently. The community/subject contradiction played out due to the community's failure to support the subject to enact the object correctly. The second contradiction played out due to the students' community who already knew the answers to the interview questions. Having access to the questions prior to the interviews was a contradiction because this contravened rules. The following contradictions played out: one, the community/rules contradiction played out as community-students failed to observe community rules. Two, the community/division of labour contradiction played out due to community-students' failure to perform their roles and responsibilities. Three, the community/subject contradiction played out due to the community's failure to support the subject to enable the subject to act on the object. According to Olweros et al. (2010), this is a Level Two or secondary contradiction because it is between two different elements of the activity system.

From the participants, it was very clear that all the contradictions were as a result of deviant behaviour by some elements, including subjects and community, who failed to adhere to the rules and did not work according to the division of labour. Three colleges, A, B and C, had contradictions between community and rules. Contradictions played out in the process, given the diversity of perspectives and the collaborative nature of the activity.

6.5 Summary

This chapter presented and analysed data that addressed Research Question Two about rules guiding the selection of student teachers into teacher training colleges. Rules in CHAT refer to formal or informal regulations that can constrain or liberate the activity and provide guidance on correct procedures and acceptance interactions to take with other community members (Yamagata-Lynch 210:23). The following rules which were used to guide the selection of student teachers into teachers' colleges emerged: college guidelines for student selection, minimum requirements, academic performance, student teacher attributes, public service regulations and quality assurance served as guidelines for student selection. As a researcher and also VP for the participating college I shared the same rules as expressed by the other three VPs and my Selection Committee Members. Contradictions in student selection processes also emerged, mainly around how subjects operated outside the division of labour.

One of the guiding rules that emerged from the data was the minimum requirement to screen candidates who were coming for interviews. Candidates without the basic entry points requirements of five O Level subjects, including English and Mathematics, were weeded out

and not invited for interviews. For all colleges no challenges were encountered by implementing this requirement. The minimum requirements were stipulated by the ministry. However, there were differences in this area as College D indicated that they required an indigenous language and College B required Science in their minimum requirements. This was a contradiction.

Again, addressing the issue of rules that were used in guiding student selection into teachers' colleges, academic performance emerged. All colleges used academic performance to select students who qualified for the teacher education course. This was done by selecting candidates with high subject passes first. Those students who scored highly in their academic results, interviews and written tests were given first preference in selection. Selection committee members and vice principals concurred that they used academic performance to guide the selection of students for teacher education programmes. This was confirmed during the observation interview sessions.

Still on the rules guiding student selection into teachers' colleges, the following student teacher attributes were identified as part of the guidelines for the selection of students: motivation, good communication skills, dress code, self-expression, articulation of points, honesty, trustworthiness and time consciousness. Candidates who demonstrated the above-mentioned attributes were identified and selected. This diverse range of student teacher attributes represented the different opinions from the four colleges. College B used four student teacher attributes and the rest were shared among the other three colleges.

While College B used student teacher attributes to select student teachers into college, Colleges A and C were guided by the Public Service Regulations. Regulations were used to determine the number of candidates to invite for interviews. For instance, for every vacant place three people were to compete and the same regulations were also used for transparency in the selection exercise. Both the selection committee members and the vice principals of the two colleges concurred that public service regulations guided their search for suitable student teachers. College D added an indigenous language stipulation to identify suitable candidates for the teacher education programme. They selected students with an indigenous language in addition to the minimum entry requirements. From the interview observations I confirmed that public service regulations on calculating the number of candidates to invite for the interviews was common across all four colleges. But, all colleges breached the same regulation by inviting

too many candidates for interviews. The reasons for this contradiction were that colleges were autonomous and there was no ministry policy on selection.

While College D used indigenous language to select students into teachers' colleges, Colleges A and C used marginalisation to invite students from remote areas and those who spoke minority languages.

With regards to quality assurance, three ways were used to enhance quality in the selection of students: supervision, application of anonymous marking of written tests and calculating of ratio from each panel. Heads of Departments closely supervised the selection interviews across all colleges while in College D anonymous marking of written tests was conducted to ensure transparency. In every college ratios from each interview panel were calculated to select equal numbers of students from each panel. This practice ensured that the best candidates from each panel were selected.

With regards to contradictions, only secondary contradictions were identified between community and rules in three colleges, A, B and C, and they were due to the community disregarding the rules. Community/rules contradiction played out when staff gave undue marks to their relatives to ensure that they met the required standard. Community failed to execute their roles and responsibilities allocated by the division of labour. In colleges B and C community/subject contradictions played out due to subjects not performing their duties according to the division of labour. All the mentioned contradictions cited here were secondary contradictions. At College D subject/rules contradictions played out due to the subject's failure to abide by the selection guidelines to enact on the object. Contradictions served to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the system, in this case the deficiencies and efficiencies in the tools and rules used in the selection of students. Contradictions also assisted to identify factors that facilitated or constrained the selection process. The absence of ministry policy to guide colleges seems to have been the major cause of most of the contradictions noted above. With different entry points and under different conditions in terms of regulations and rules governing the different institutions, the teachers from this system were bound to be different.

This chapter discussed the rules guiding the selection of student teachers into teacher education, and the next chapter focuses on how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: HOW STAKEHOLDERS RESPOND TO THE DEMAND FOR TEACHER TRAINING VACANCIES

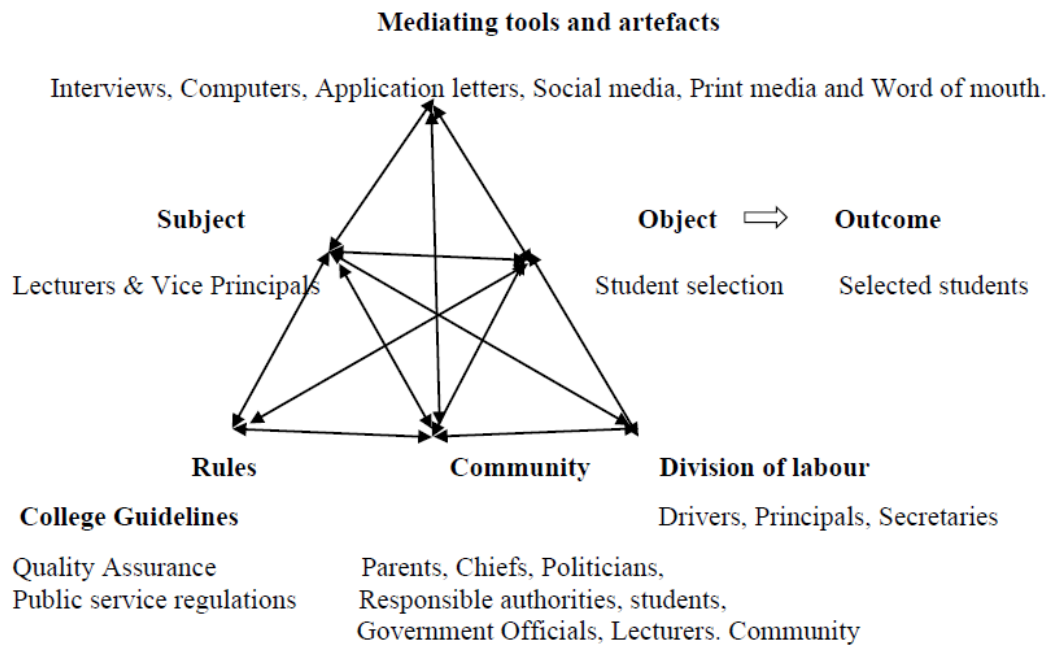
7.1 Introduction

The study sought to understand the dynamics of student teacher selection into teacher education in Zimbabwean teacher training colleges. The previous chapter addressed Research Question Two which examined the rules that guide the selection of student teachers into teacher training in selected colleges. Broadly the rules that emerged in answer to this question were minimum requirements, academic qualifications, indigenous language stipulation, student teacher attributes and public service regulations. To answer this question “*how do stakeholders respond to the demand for teacher training vacancies*” data were generated through individual face-to-face interviews with student teachers, selection committee members (lecturers) and vice principals complemented by non-participant observations of live selection interview sessions and focus group discussions with student teachers.

From the data, seven categories of stakeholders emerged: student teachers; government officials; religious groups; politicians; lecturers; surrounding families; and chiefs. In the CHAT framework the stakeholders constitute the community. In other words, the different categories of stakeholders constituted the community as reflected in the activity system Figure 13. In the study, different stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies in various forms depending on their roles and responsibilities.

In the data presentation and analysis in this chapter, I integrated data from all the participants and data sources because of the many similarities in the responses and also similarities noted in the observations. Where differences emerged, these were highlighted. In the discussion, student teacher and student are used to mean the teacher trainee and will be used interchangeably. This particular chapter is organised according to the seven categories of stakeholders highlighted above. The responses of stakeholders are discussed and summarised through their subthemes. The next section gives a summary of the CHAT theoretical Framework. This is followed by a discussion of how different stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies.

Figure 7.1: CHAT Activity system showing all elements



Source: Adapted from Engestrom 2001

In this activity system, selection of students for teacher training was the object. Hashim and Jones (2007) define the object as the intended activity. Meanwhile the subjects, selection committee members and vice principals, are individuals who enact the object, i.e., engage in the selection process using both psychological and physical mediational tools and resources. It is the subjects who actually identify and transform the object: student selection into the desired results. The outcome in this case is the selected students. The community of this activity system as indicated above consisted of college staff, both lecturing staff and non-lecturing staff, the principal and external people like parents, chiefs, politicians and the religious. These diverse groups of individuals had a shared interest in the object (Trust 2017), in this case, they were interested in student selection for teacher training. From the CHAT perspective, the community instituted rules to control or regulate how stakeholders behave in the activity system. Through division of labour, duties, roles or responsibilities are allocated to each community member depending on capability and skills. For example, the selection committee is responsible for selecting students into teacher education programmes. Student teacher stakeholders (community) are expected to apply, go through the interviews and write tests to qualify for selection. Mediational tools are the instruments used by the selection committee, the subjects and the community which include psychological tools like knowledge, experience, interviews and material resources like tests, selection interview letters, interview venues, and computers

in performing the duties allocated by the division of labour. Rules are the guidelines to be followed by subjects and community in performance of their roles and responsibilities according to the division of labour to ensure achievement of the outcome.

In the CHAT framework, given the collaborative nature of the activity system tension or contradictions occur. Jones (2014), Foot (2014) and Kirk and Nilsen (2016) describe contradictions as indicating a misfit or mismatches between different parts of the activity system. As alluded to in Chapter 3, the four types of contradictions identified include **primary contradiction**, where there is conflict within a given node in the activity system, for example, and contradictory sets of guidelines on student selection within the rules element. A **secondary contradiction** arises when there is conflict between two or more nodes in the activity system, for instance, conflict between subjects, and community (Jones 2014). A **tertiary contradiction** occurs when there are changes over time, like the latest selection approach conflicting with the previous selection approach (Meyers 2007). Conflict occurs if the ideas of the previous selection approach are incorporated into the latest selection approach. **Quaternary contradiction** is triggered when there is conflict between two competing activities, for example, the subject's point of view on the final product, i.e., the type of student selected, is radically different from the end-user ministry's point of view. With regards to funnel theory, Gerdzhikov (2015), Perna (2005), Copeland (2009) and Zinn and Johansson (2015) identified five stages through which prospective students pass before they are finally registered for a programme. Stage One involves creating awareness and interest in prospective students through advertisements; in Stage Two, inquiries, the prospective students may express interest in the programme through visiting the website or visiting an event at the institution; in Stage Three applicants decide to apply to the institution; Stage four, admitted students having undergone the selection process (interviews and writing tests) receive acceptance letters; and, finally, Stage Five, enrolled students, is when the admitted students officially pay fees, get enrolled and commit themselves to study at the institution.

In analysing and presenting data, student teachers are identified by numbers 1 – 40.

7.2 How Student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies?

With regard to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, student teacher stakeholders in CHAT responded to the demand for vacancies in six ways. They responded to vacancy

advertisements, selection interview invitation letters, and selection interviews, paying fees and complaining. These ways are discussed and summarised below.

7.2.1 Students' response to vacancy advertisements

Table 7.1: Applications submitted before invitation for interviews

No of submitted Applications per college	1	2	3
College A	1	1	8
College B	1	2	7
College C	1	2	7
College D	1	3	6
Total	4	8	28

Source: Researcher: 2022

The table above shows the number of times student teachers responded to advertisements for vacancies before they were invited for interviews

In response to the demand for vacancies in relation to advertisements, one major theme that emerged from the data was submission of the application letters. All the 40 students as community and stakeholders said they responded by submitting application letters. Across the selected Colleges 28 students reported that they applied three times before being invited for an interview. At College A 8 students responded by applying three times. This was exemplified by community members Student 03 and 17 at College A and Student 18 at College B during individual interviews who reported: *“Three times.”* At College C 7 students had also applied three times before being invited for an interview: for example, during the individual interview Student 04 said, *“When I got that place, it was the third time.”* Applying was an important step because it was the only way one could be considered and possibly selected. While some students applied to one college, many applied to different colleges. In support of applying to different colleges, literature sources (Gordon 2018) confirm that the more colleges one applies to the more chances one has of getting into college. However, again drawing on literature surveyed, this is in contrast to Meier (2016) who contends that sending out more applications does not increase your chances of getting hired: well written applications do. Drawing on CHAT, the theoretical framework which guides this study, the different nodes of the activity system acted according to their division of labour. The subjects (selection committee) acted by

sending out the advertisements (mediation tool), the students (stakeholders-community) acted by responding to the advertisements using their psychological tools (knowledge or understanding) and material tools (application letters). Relating to funnel theory, applications are made at the applicant Stage 3, referred to as the applicant stage (Zinn and Johansson 2015) where the applicant expresses an interest in the institution by applying (Copeland 2009). This finding links with the CHAT first principle which says that a mediated and object-oriented activity system and its relationship to other activity systems is the prime unit of analysis (Melvin 2009; Engestrom (1987) as cited by Hasan 2007). Birch (2010), cited by Gharibi, Danesh and Shahrodi (2012), contends that the purpose of the applicant stage under funnel theory is to stimulate desire and push people to buy. In this case the advertisement succeeded to push the prospective students to apply for admission.

At College D Student 05 responded about applying that: *“It was the second time applying to this college.”* In response to each advertisement students sent one application to that college. This is how some students ended up applying to many colleges. However, several application letters were not consistent with literature because according to Jordan (2019), the benefit of fewer applications is that it looks less desperate and shows that you have actually considered what makes a particular college unique. Drawing on the funnel theory, sending out application letters by students occurs at Applicant Stage 3. Zinn and Johansson (2015) and Copeland (2009) point out that applicants are prospective students who apply for admittance or acceptance to an academic programme. All colleges indicated that student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by applying each time there was an advertisement. Furthermore, from the individual interviews, focus group discussion and my observation sessions of selection interviews it was evident that in relation to vacancy advertisements, student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by applying to colleges, often being invited for selection interviews after applying at least three times. Within the theoretical framework of CHAT student teacher stakeholders, as community, responded to the advertisements by applying to different colleges according to the division of labour.

In the following section, I discuss how student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies when they received interview invitation letters.

7.2.2 Student Teacher Stakeholders’ response to selection interview invitation letters

With regard to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, responding to the demand for vacancies in relation to selection interview invitations, community members responded in three different forms. Some responded with joy, others responded with doubt, while another group responded with fear. Their responses are illustrated in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2: Number of students who received invitation letters with joy, doubt or fear

	Joy	Fear and doubt	Total
College A	5	2	7
College B	10	3	13
College C	6	4	10
College D	7	3	10
Total	28	12	40

Source: Researcher: 2022

7.2.2.1 Joy

In relation to receipt of selection interview invitation letters evidence from both individual interviews and focus group discussions showed that 28 student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies with joy when they received selection interview invitation letters. In line with this joyful reception Camara and Kimmel (2005) point out that the manner in which we select candidates ought to nurture a sense of hope, not of hopelessness. Following receipt of the selection interview invitation letters, some responded with optimism. 28 student teacher stakeholders indicated that they felt joy and enthusiasm when they were invited for interviews. During the focus group interviews Student 31, community member at College A, said: *“I was overwhelmed with joy, since I had applied several times without a reply or invitation.”* This community member got an invitation after turning in several applications. The term “overwhelmed” generally implies overcome with emotion, in this case with happiness. Given that this student had not received any responses previously, being invited for interviews was huge and offered joy. At College C similar sentiments of joy in response to reception of the selection interview invitation letters were echoed by students during individual interviews. For example, Student 30 actually said, *“I felt happy because it was my first time to be called for interviews.”* This participant, like Student 31, had submitted three applications but responses were either negative or there were no replies at all.

From College D one participant, a community member, also responded to the demand for vacancies in particular to the selection interview invitation letter by celebrating and rejoicing. During focus group interviews Student 32 at College D said, *“I nearly touched Mars because I had for many years been looking forward to this day.”* The participant was on ‘cloud nine’ because several years had gone by without getting invited for any selection interviews. Viewing this from a CHAT perspective the community member celebrated with joy on receiving the selection interview invitation letter, after the subjects had enacted on their roles and responsibilities – sending out letters as expected by the division of labour. The expression ‘I nearly touched Mars’ meant so happy that it felt like he was flying: he had attained something that appeared impossible to achieve. In addition, community member Student 33 at College B during individual interviews said: *“It was my first time to be invited for interviews. I was excited and astonished. I could not control my happiness.”* The participant responded to the demand for vacancies with uncontrollable happiness and excitement after being invited for selection interviews. Excitement is a positive experience (Veny 2018). In this case it implied that student teachers, as community members, were happy to receive the selection interview invitation letters.

From both the individual interviews and the focus group discussions, 28 student stakeholders responded with joy to the demand for vacancies related to selection interview invitation letters. From the CHAT perspective, some student teacher stakeholders as part of the community responded to the demand for vacancies with joy at receiving the mediational tool/selection interview invitation letters to attend selection interviews, the object, in line with the division of labour. From CHAT, an activity system is an object-oriented and artefact-mediated unit of analysis, occurring within the context of other activity systems (Asghar 2013). In other words, the subject, selection committee, engaged in activity with an intended goal or motive-object, student selection. To achieve the intended goal, the subject used mediational tools to reach the community. From the funnel theory it is exciting when all goes well and the applicant engages with inquiries after they start their application, whether with form, essay or test result (Gerdzhikov 2015). Again, from funnel theory this is the application stage where applicants receive responses to their application letters. However, not all stakeholders were excited upon receipt of invitation letters. Some experienced fear.

7.2.2.2 Fear

Responding to the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges, evidence from both the individual interviews and focus group discussions showed that 12 student teacher stakeholders responded to the receipt of the selection interview invitation letters with fear and doubt. Fear is a survival mechanism that kicks into gear when one senses danger and risk (Morgan 2009). This is a normal emotion because it motivates one to take necessary action. The applicants took action by preparing for the interviews to counter the fear of failure. However, fear negatively impacts on a person's thinking and decision making and, as a result, one may not act appropriately. Hence, student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies upon receipt of invitation letters with anxiety. Fear probably emanated from feelings of uncertainty of success in the selection interview to get a place to train as a teacher. For instance, Student 34 at College C during focus group interviews said, *"I was nervous because I had applied to two colleges and the interviews were on the same day. The two colleges had invited me."* Nervousness emanated from the two simultaneous selection interview invitations from the two colleges. Within the theoretical framework of CHAT reacting with fear and nervousness was a contradiction given that contradictions are not inherently bad but generate disturbances which create force and motive for change, innovation and development (Mukeredzi 2009). Thus, in this case fear was a contradiction because this was a diversion from the expected norms and practices of being joyful in such cases. Fear was a secondary contradiction because there was conflict between student teacher, selection interview invitation letter and student selection (Jones 2014; Scheckle 2014). In this study, the fear and nervousness were likely to have prompted change through adequate preparation for the interviews given that as Edwards, cited by Mukeredzi (2009) says: "Tensions and contradictions beget a capacity for interpreting and approaching contradictions and focusing on the core objects" (94) Adequate preparation then would reflect a focus on the core object: preparation for interview to enact the object – student selection.

Meanwhile, at College B Student 37 was equally frightened when they received the selection interview invitation letter. During individual interviews, the student said, *"I did not feel happy because I had attended two interviews before at College X and College Y."* The participant was scared due to previous unsuccessful interviews. Therefore, the student teacher stakeholder responded to the demand for vacancies upon receipt of the selection interview invitation letter with nervousness. Furthermore, other student teacher stakeholders also felt anxious and afraid on receiving selection interview invitation letters. For example, Student 35 at College D during focus group interviews said, *"I was afraid of coming for interviews."* The participant responded

to the demand for vacancies after receiving selection interview invitation letters with fear to attend interviews. Studies identified the causes of fear for interviews as the pressure to perform to the best of one's ability (Clarke 2019). But, Freeman (2018), Burston (2019), Martin (2013) and Ganesh (2016) posit that fear of interviews is fear of the unknown, fear of rejection and fear of looking like one does not know anything. This suggests that people are afraid of things they do not know. Meanwhile, Ettner and Grinshteyn (2017) and Towey (2016) contend that fear is triggered by perceived threat. This implies that fear is an emotional reaction marked by feeling that some danger could result, in this case related to being rejected by the college system. The value of fear/anxiety is that it prepares us to react to danger (Towey 2016). In preparation for the coming selection interviews students probably read around, researched on the internet and consulted experienced teachers about the teaching career. From a CHAT perspective, student teacher stakeholders reacting to the receipt of selection interview invitation letters with fear/anxiety was a contradiction because they portrayed diversion from what was expected. They were expected to rejoice which implies they did not act within the division of labour. The contradiction occurred across student selection interview invitation letters. Student selection was a secondary contradiction because there were clashes between more than two nodes, namely, community, tools and object (Jones 2014 and Scheckle 2014). The student teacher stakeholders received selection interview invitation letters from the subject with fear/anxiety/nervousness, hence, this would work against the enactment of the object, i.e., would interfere with their approach to selection interviews and, consequently, the achievement of the intended outcome. This was a secondary contradiction as the conflict involved more than two nodes: community, object and the division of labour.

While some student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies subsequent to the receipt of selection interview invitation letters with fear and anxiety, others responded with doubt.

7.2.2.3 Doubt

Responding to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, evidence from both individual interviews and focus group discussion showed that 12 students responded with doubt when they received selection interview invitation letters as alluded to above. For example, at College A during individual interviews, Student 36 expressed mixed feelings when he said, "*I was*

afraid because I was not sure whether I was going to make it in the interview. I attended one selection interview before receiving this interview invitational letter.” The participant felt frightened because of the previous experience. With regards to experience, Noctis (2020) and Michael (2020) contend that bad experiences and failures in any area cause doubt in subsequent related performances. This implies that experiencing failure, adversity or disappointment may cause doubt. Failure in our work is cited as the effects of doubt, worry and fear (Noctis 2020). However, literature points out that self-doubt provides benefits in that it motivates one to keep learning and growing. This relates to contradictions which bring about change and innovation. It makes one want to continue to better oneself through further training to improve one’s skills and knowledge (Moravek 2019).

From the discussion above, in response to the demand for vacancies related to receipt of selection interview invitation letters, 28 student stakeholders responded with joy, while 12 responded with feelings of nervousness, anxiety and doubt. Within the theoretical framework CHAT, joy emanated from receipt of the mediational tool, the selection interview invitation letter, which enabled enacting the object, student selection, to achieve the outcome, students selected, as expected by the community and division of labour. However, from the CHAT perspective the reception of selection interview invitation letters by 12 student teacher stakeholders or community members with fear and doubt was in contrast to the division of labour and, hence, created a contradiction which would constrain the enactment of the object and, consequently, achievement of the outcome. Mukeredzi (2009) and Waite (2006) concur that contradictions play out when there is diversion from expected and acceptable norms and practices.

Again, drawing on CHAT principles, the central role of contradictions is that they are generally sources of change and development (Engestrom 1999). This was a secondary contradiction because it affected at least two nodes, the community, the mediation tools and the object (Jones 2014). There is significant difference between joy and fear: fear impedes enacting of the object and achievement of the outcome, while joy facilitates these processes. In line with the funnel theory as highlighted above the applicants are prospective students who apply for admittance (Copeland 2009). This was the case with these prospective students in this study who were waiting to attend interviews for which they were invited.

7.2.3 Student Stakeholder response to demand for vacancies by attending selection interviews

Table 7.3: Selection interviews attended

	Number of total participants	0 interviews attended	1 interviews attended	2 interviews attended	3 interviews attended	4 interviews attended	5 interviews attended	6 interviews attended
College A	10	0	1	1	2	2	4	0
College B	10	0	1	1	1	3	3	0
College C	10	0	1	1	1	2	4	1
College D	10	0	1	1	2	2	4	0
Total	40	0	4	4	6	10	15	1

Source: Researcher 2022.

Again, addressing the dynamics of entry into teacher education, thirty-two student teacher stakeholders responded by attending at least three selection interviews (see Table 7.3 above on number of interviews attended). The results from the table show that all forty candidates went through interviews at least once to get a place for training and a total of 8 candidates attended between one or two interviews, implying that there was stiff competition for places. However, thirty-two students made it after attending between three and six interviews. Attending interviews four or five times clearly illustrates that there was severe competition. Only one student attended six interviews before getting a place. Explaining the number of interviews attended Student 38 at College D during individual interviews said, *“I think this was the fifth interview before this one.”* The participant responded to the demand for vacancies by attending many interviews before the last one in which the participant was successful in getting a place. Attending previous interviews may have provided the participant with interview experience and also enhanced chances of getting a place. Attending some interviews without success may suggest that the student did not possess some required attributes. Drawing on literature surveyed (Hund 2017) it is not the number of times one attends interviews that counts but the way one performs in the interviews. This implies that one needed to perform well in the interview to be selected. Drawing from CHAT the community member/student had attended many interviews where both psychological and material mediational tools were used and this was in accordance with their division of labour.

Still discussing student stakeholders' response to the demand for vacancies by attending interviews, during individual interviews another stakeholder, Student 39 at College A said:

I attended more than two interviews at different colleges. At College B, it was not friendly because they gave me no chance to answer questions. They were firing questions from all angles. It was queer.

This participant also responded to the demand for vacancies by attending interviews at different colleges in the hope of increasing chances of being selected. From the response, the subjects were within their division of labour, had used the mediation tools, interviews, to act on the object, student selection, in which they used both psychological (knowledge) and material (interview itself) tools to enact the object and achieve the outcome. While I believe that attending many selection interviews at different colleges may have resulted in the participant gaining a lot of experience of interview techniques and questions, this is contrary to literature surveyed which points out that attending several interviews does not translate into a high chance of being offered a place: rather, it is technique that counts (Hund 2017). Drawing on Hund, attending different interviews was also an indication of the very high demand for vacancies at the colleges given the figures alluded to in Chapter One of this study.

At College B many candidates attended three interviews before getting selected as exemplified by Student 40 during individual interviews who said, "*I attended three interviews.*" As alluded to above, attending more than one interview may have been due to stiff competition for places to train as teachers and the hope of striking a chance to be selected at one of the colleges. Further, attending different selection interviews may also have been an indication of desperation for entry into teachers' colleges. Student teacher stakeholders apparently tried every avenue to enter teacher education which was confirmed in both individual interviews and the focus group discussion interviews in all the four colleges. In support of attending different selection interviews, while Hund (2017) as noted above opposed attending many interviews, Root (2017) and Akrani (2011) on the contrary concur that attending many selection interviews helps to develop candidates' confidence. Furthermore, Akrani (2011) argues that interviews build experience and communication skills. All 40 students responded to the demand for vacancies by attending selection interviews for teacher training at different colleges and for diverse sessions, ranging from one interview to six interviews, because of desperation for entry into teacher education given the stiff competition and the high demand for vacancies. Viewing

this in the CHAT framework, interviews were mediational tools used by the subject to enact the object to achieve the outcome as expected by the division of labour. From the above discussion, all nodes of the activity system – subjects, community, tools, rules, object – acted according to their division of labour and eventually the outcome was achieved. This finding links with CHAT in the sense that the unit of analysis is the activity as a whole with all components of the activity system influencing each other in complex interactions between individuals and their environment (Frambach et al. 2014). This finding also links with the funnel theory that once a prospect has sufficient interest to consider your service, you must convince them in such a way that they desire the service and take action because of a direct benefit the service offers that satisfies their needs (Goldberg 2017). To show their desire for the service, the prospective students attended selection interviews at different colleges.

Besides interview attendance, one way of responding to the demand for vacancies attempted by some student teacher stakeholders was to pay fees before being offered vacancies.

7.2.4 Unsuccessful student stakeholder response to demand for vacancies by paying fees

Explaining other challenges faced in the selection of students, one subject, Selection Committee Member C2, indicated that some community members responded by paying fees without the offer of a vacancy:

We have had cases where a student who failed the interviews proceeds to pay fees. Such students get payment details from other students. It is only during registration that you realize that we do not have these students on the pass list.

Some unsuccessful prospective students attempted to cheat the system by paying fees without being offered vacancies. The act of paying fees without offer letters and after unsuccessful interviews was a contradiction because the student teacher stakeholder tried to achieve the outcome by acting outside the division of labour: they went against acceptable practices in the activity system (Mukeredzi, 2009; Waite 2006) where offer letters are released before fees are paid. Thus, from the CHAT perspective using the mediational tool, fees payment, without offer letters, the appropriate mediational tool in this activity system, the community constrained the object to get the outcome. A secondary contradiction occurred because there was conflict with more than two nodes, namely, subject, community, tools and object (Jones 2014). This practice

was not acceptable hence, the candidate was disqualified. Drawing from literature, one of the reasons for cheating may be that prospective students realized that there would be no serious consequences when the cheating was discovered and that they would possibly have a chance to get into the institution (Mellar et al. 2018). While Loschiavo (2015) concurs with Mellar (2018) on the first reason why students cheat, he further argues that students cheat because they are surrounded by examples of dishonest acts, hence, often come to believe that dishonest behaviour is rewarded and they do not hesitate to engage in it. However, such behaviour could also be a sign of desperation on the part of these prospective students. The prospective student probably did not want to let down friends, relatives or other family members (Loschiavo 2015). Incidentally, in college admissions, cheating is consistent with literature as demonstrated by Katersky, Hutchinson and Levine (2019) and Shamsian and McLaughlin (2020) who concur that with massive college admissions, cheating scandals were reported in the U.S.A by ABC News and Insider Line. These cases of cheating involved changing entrance exam locations, obtaining medical documentation that their child had a learning disability and parents seeking to extend time for their children to take entrance exams and others paying millions of dollars as bribes (Katersky et al. 2019). While in these cases, parents cheated to get their children into colleges, one might also in this case say parents as community were involved in providing money for the unsuccessful community member to pay fees and get into college. The effect of cheating one's way into the teacher training programme may be that such acts would discredit the programme and the institution. Probably another reason for such misbehaviour could be that aspiring student teachers might have been encouraged by some institutional stakeholders. In a related research on cheating in Bulgaria, Mellar et al. (2018) discovered that students were assisted by invigilators to cheat in the examinations. So, there could be possibilities that such prospective students were assisted by some staff members to act against the division of labour. However, incidents of some prospective student stakeholders responding to the demand for vacancies by paying fees despite not having been offered vacancies which were reported in College C, were not corroborated by participants at any other college. Within the CHAT framework this was a contradiction as explained above. Rules within the CHAT framework define how participants are expected to behave (Wilson 2014). From this discussion, these prospective students responded to the demand for vacancies by deceitfully paying fees, thereby trying to create a shorter route to achieve the outcome and avoid the selection process, which created a contradiction. This finding links with CHAT where contradictions within an activity system can prompt developments (Asghar 2014). Institutions should look for loopholes in the system and suggest how to close them. This was a secondary contradiction as it occurred

between community node, subject and the rules of the community. Drawing from the funnel approach, prospective students who apply for admittance or acceptance to a programme are expected to portray honest behaviour throughout the process (Copeland 2009). Other than premature payment of fees, raising complaints was another way in which student stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies.

7.2.5 Unsuccessful student stakeholder response to demand for vacancies by complaining

With regards to the dynamics of entry into teacher education, prospective student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by complaining as illustrated by the subject, the Vice Principal at College B, during individual interviews who commented that:

Yes, there are complaints even from those with lower qualifications who were not considered. Everyone who applies expects to be invited, yet this is not possible.

As a VP from one participating college, I concur with other VP that complaints were common from candidates who failed to make it. From the CHAT perspective, prospective students with lower mediational tools that constrain the subject to enact the object and achieve the outcome as expected by the division of labour complained about not being selected. The lower qualifications referred to relatively weaker grades, as all applicants would have at least the minimum entry qualifications as explained in the previous chapter. The issue of unsuccessful candidates complaining is consistent with literature surveyed which indicates that interview results lead to feelings of bitterness on the part of the unsuccessful candidates who end up raising complaints (Heathfield 2018), in particular when they know they have qualified for entry. However, complaints are often healthy because they help in reflection on experiences and activities and in identification of efficiencies and deficiencies in the system. Complaints may be minimised by situations where limited numbers commensurate with the available vacancies are invited for selection interviews, as opposed to creating false hope to thousands of applicants as was evident in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe at the time of the study where thousands of applicants were invited to compete for five hundred vacancies. This was confirmed by Samukange (2014) who reported that one college interviewed 8 000 for 500 vacancies. According to Marufu (2014b) this was meant to fundraise for the colleges as applicants were charged \$10 each interview fees. Consequently, a lot of money was raised from the large numbers that were invited for interviews. For all the colleges, inviting large numbers

as a fundraising venture had apparently become an established source of income but created challenges for all stakeholders including the subjects, the selection committees and the vice principals. Viewing this from the CHAT perspective inviting large numbers was a contradiction by the community because it worked against public service regulations and constrained subjects in enacting the object, as well as constraining other community members, and obstructing the smooth achievement of the outcome as expected by the division of labour. In answer to how the selection committee carried out the selection process, Selection committee member A4 at College A pointed out that: *We are guided by the public service guidelines which state that for any post at least three people should contest. For instance, if we want 500 students, then 1 500 candidates must contest.* This illustrates why inviting large numbers is a contradiction as discussed above. In the CHAT framework, the subject constrained the object to get the outcome by inviting large numbers and this portrayed working outside the division of labour.

Still with regards to the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges, some student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by calling the colleges, as explained by the Vice Principal at College C during the individual interviews who said:

Some of the applicants' phone asking why they did not get places when they have passed O level very well.

Demanding explanations why some candidates were not successful to enter teacher education could lead to improvements in service delivery by teacher colleges. As a VP, if selection committee members are aware that candidates raise complaints, the way the selection process is done would be above board. In this case calling for an explanation was within the division of labour as members of the community and the subjects had an obligation within their roles and responsibilities in the activity system to explain to members of the community. From the CHAT perspective, thus, it was the responsibility and role of the subjects to provide such information which was within the division of labour. In addition, literature surveyed points out that it may improve the reputation of an organization and strengthen public confidence if the public is fully aware of the processes (Ombudsman Western Australia 2017). Questioning the selection process by the public was vital as it could possibly improve accountability and transparency in the colleges. In relation to the CHAT framework, Engstrom (2004) points out that with such conflicting forces, contradictions may necessitate innovations which often lead to learning. Thus, in this study, the subjects were likely to reflect and experience expansive

learning (Engestrom 2004), consequently, improving the selection processes. Questioning the selection and admission processes has support from literature surveyed, where Camera and Kimmel (2005) point out that the selection process is open to public scrutiny, as the community from a CHAT perspective cannot entrust that critical process to a few people. This provides a justification for why unsuccessful applicants and the public raised questions and complaints. Again, in the CHAT framework the community member called the subject questioning how they enacted the object which was within the community division of labour, as they had the right to question. Thus, applicants, as stakeholders, responded to the demand for vacancies by complaining, calling or questioning the selection process.

Some student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by identifying 'connections' in colleges. For example, At College B the subject, Selection Committee Member B3, during interviews commented: *"They complain that some candidates have connections in the college. People do not accept that we are serious with interviews."* Having connections referred to having friends, family and acquaintances within the college to help them get in. Some unsuccessful applicants may have felt that those with relatives were at an advantage. Being linked to college staff may lead to selection of students through unorthodox processes or seeking favours from the selection committee members. From a CHAT perspective, community complained that subjects failed to execute their allocated roles and duties due to connections with some community members, hence, creating contradiction because having connections was not within the division of labour. The resultant contradiction was secondary because it occurred between more than two nodes: community, subject, object, rules, tools and division of labour (Jones 2014). According to Seppala (2013) having connections means having close and positive relationships with others in the social world. In the context of this study this suggested that one belonged to or was related to someone in the college and used that connection as a mediational tool to enact the object and get an outcome. Seppala (2013) adds that social connection is a basic human need. In this study being connected might have compromised quality during interviews if it was considered during the selection process, consequently, impacting negatively on the quality and standards of the teacher education programme. Having connections or being linked to college members was a contradiction in the CHAT framework as this could mean that some community members were considered for teacher training when they did not deserve to be. Employing such connections, the subjects would have created a contradiction as this was not according to the rules and responsibilities of the division of labour.

Still related to having connections with college members Student 18 observed that in response to the demand for vacancies, some candidates wrote the test in the bus because they were related to people in the college. This community member at College A during focus group discussion interviews said, *“At College E, there were too many connections. Some candidates wrote the test in the bus and we then knew that those students had already got the places.”* Although Student 18 mentioned College E, this particular college was not one of the selected colleges explored in this study. The fact that some candidates were probably linked to some members of staff then created an unlevelled ‘playing field’ because such candidates would have been at an advantage over others. Such connections, therefore, created discredit of the interview process as an objective selection tool and of the quality of student selected and the whole selection process in such cases became highly questionable. Viewing this from the CHAT framework, due to connections between some subjects and some community members, subjects acted in contradiction by allowing community to write the test in the bus, which was a gross contradiction because this was not within the division of labour and, therefore, constrained the subject to enact the object and, thus, achieved the outcome through unorthodox processes. Again, this was a secondary contradiction which arose because it occurred between one or more nodes of the activity system (Sannino and Engestrom 2018).

Writing the interview test in the bus was a clear deviation from the college and community rules and constituted a contradiction because this was against the normal acceptable procedures (Engestrom 2004) where candidates used classrooms. For all colleges, the college rules indicated that to be considered for selection one needed to have passed an interview. Although the rule did not state where the test should be taken, the use of a bus as the venue was a gross violation of division of labour which implied corrupt tendencies. These kinds of practices were reported in two colleges both of which were not selected for this study. Drawing on literature surveyed Tshili (2015) cites one Zimbabwean college corruption case in which prospective students were each paying between \$350 and \$500 to college officials. While this college was not explored in this study, such under-hand practices, although they may not have been mentioned in the colleges investigated, could also have been happening. In such cases the corrupt staff would pressurise college officials, subjects and community members into accepting undeserving students after receiving the above stated amounts. These issues constitute contradictions in the CHAT framework as the corrupt practices were a diversion from accepted norms and practices (Engestrom 2004; Waite 2006) and corrupt practices were also outside the activity system. Thus, all the nodes of CHAT were implicated: subject,

community, tool, (money), rule (which was not followed), division of labour and object. This situation triggered a secondary contradiction because it involved one or more elements (Kirk and Nilsen 2016). While the rule for selecting candidates in all colleges required all candidates to pass the interview in addition to other requirements, the case in question contradicted that, because instead of passing interviews students bought vacancies and, consequently, corruption occurred. Again, drawing on CHAT's 4th principle tensions accumulated within and between activity systems, creating contradictions which are understood as playing a central role in change and development of the activity systems (Banna and Hasan 2010). The use of an inappropriate mediational tool (money) to achieve the intended outcome and failure to follow community rules created this tension. However, while the change was not evident in this study, in trying to resolve such tensions within the activity system, potential innovations and possibilities are likely to result in change and development. This is the Applicants Stage 3 of the funnel theory where the prospective students have been invited for selection interviews but have not yet received offer letters for teacher training because their applications are still being processed. In conclusion, issues relating to connections subsequently created contradictions in CHAT and suggested corrupt activities in the selection process. In addition to the issue of connections, government officials also responded to the demand for vacancies as shown below.

7.3 Government stakeholders' response to the demand for vacancies

Government officials as stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by submitting requests and recommending applicants. Two groups of officials emerged: government official stakeholders who submitted requests and other government official stakeholders who recommended applicants. Government officials in the context of this study were officers who worked in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education at the Head Office. In terms of reporting structures, Higher Education was the employer of all colleges, including selection committee members, vice principals and principals. Explaining how these members of the community, the government officials, responded to the demand for vacancies, the subject, Vice Principal at College B during individual interviews said, *"Well, we are social animals; we always have requests from those we interact with and from those we do business with and these are taken on board."* From the response, when government officials responded to the demand for vacancies by requesting places for their relatives, college officials apparently did not turn down such requests: as subordinates they apparently had to comply. Government officials,

however, asking subordinates for places results in corruption with the effect of possibly lowering the standards of training and, consequently, the quality of teacher produced. This was yet another contradiction as it was against rules and not within division of labour. Such contradictions involved enrolling undeserving students at the expense of strong students (Tshili 2014) and sometimes involving buying those places. Drawing from literature surveyed a report released by Transparency International; Chimhete (2013) confirms corruption of this nature by commenting that the most common forms of corruption rampant in Zimbabwe include demanding bribes to facilitate admission to schools or colleges. The expression ‘we are social animals’ implied that college vice principals’ lives depended on others which was a clear admission that they accepted such requests. In the same vein, Cohen (2010) said, according to Aristotle, human beings are ‘social animals’ and, therefore, naturally seek the companionship and help of others as part of their well-being. This was apparently the case in this study. In the CHAT framework, government officials, the community, requested for places through requests, mediational tools, from the subject, selection committee members and vice principals, to enact the object, student selection, outside rules and the division of labour. This was again a secondary contradiction which affected many nodes because these community members occupied higher positions than selection committee members and vice principals and this was a contradiction as it was not within acceptable norms.

While some government official stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by submitting requests as shown in College B above, at College C other government official stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by recommending applicants. A completely new set of applicants were recommended for training at College C. For example, the Vice Principal at College C during individual interviews, commented, *“No, they give recommendations for some applications... If such cases fail the interview, we normally tell pastors of such results.”* Still referring to recommending applicants, the Vice Principal at College D suggested: *“To a lesser extent. There are some influential people who may recommend a candidate for consideration. We consider the student for a place if he/she passes the interviews.”* From the comments, the use of ‘No’ from College C suggests that recommendations made by government officials did not influence the selection process. This was in sharp contrast to the use of ‘to a lesser extent’ from College D which suggests that government officials influenced the selection process. While recommendations by senior officers would normally be regarded highly, responses by the two vice principals suggest otherwise. The term ‘some influential people’ referred to government officials because that

was confirmed in a follow-up explanation by the Vice Principal at College D. The recommendations were meant to endorse an applicant as a suitable candidate and, therefore, added weight to the application letter and enhanced the chances of a student's being selected by the provided additional mediational tool, the recommendation. Having a candidate endorsed by a government official in a senior office swayed the 'scale' in favour of that candidate notwithstanding that that was outside the rules and division of labour in the activity system. Literature surveyed indicates that written recommendations are often required by some United States teacher education programmes (Darmody and Smyth 2016). While recommendations are considered for entry into teacher education programmes in the United States, as already alluded to in Chapter Six, from the vice principal responses above, they also carry weight in the Zimbabwean context. Government official stakeholders' influence on the selection process is consistent with literature surveyed: in Ghana, for example, government officials influenced student selection in similar ways. Colleges often come under pressure from prominent people in the local educational communities to admit candidates other than the best qualified for teacher education entry (Akyeampong 2003). The selection procedure which is intended to be meritocratic often turns otherwise. The influence on the selection process by government official stakeholders is a diversion from acceptable practices because these are corrupt exercises which tarnish the process and the system. In the CHAT framework, government officials who responded to the demands for vacancies by recommending candidates for selection to the subjects created a contradiction because community members recommended other community members against the rules of the community and division of labour, giving some candidates an advantage over others. This was a clear case of a primary contradiction within the same node of the activity system (Frambach et al. 2014). In response to the demand for vacancies government officials' recommending applicants for teacher training impacted heavily on the selection procedures and quality of the student teachers selected. The situation created primary contradictions that occurred within the same node and secondary contradictions that occurred across different nodes of the activity system (Engestrom 2001). The primary contradiction occurred in the sense that government officials disadvantaged prospective students by recommending their relatives. In the secondary contradiction, government officials acted against division of labour, rule, tool, subject and object in the activity system.

Evidence provided by vice principals from all the colleges indicated that the government official stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by submitting requests and

recommending candidates. During the selection interview observation sessions, recommendation letters from government officials, heads of institutions and government departments, political parties and religious groups were provided to the interviewers by some candidates for consideration. This finding aligns with CHAT as it relates to contradictions within an activity system that can prompt developments (Asghar 2014). In this case, tension emerged because the subject viewed the object as choosing suitable candidates for the teacher education programme, while government officials viewed the object as accepting the recommended and requested candidates. This difference in the way the two nodes viewed the object resulted in tensions between the subject and the rules, creating a secondary contradiction which involved more than two nodes (Jones 2014). And this finding links with funnel theory Principle Number 3 because this principle says the goal is to provide excellent support during the application process and that is provided by attaching some recommendation from important people. In addition to the government officials' response to the demand for vacancies, religious stakeholders also responded to the demand for vacancies as shown below.

7.4 Responsible authorities stakeholders' responses to demand for vacancies

Religious stakeholders, in response to the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges, demanded a quota within the five to six hundred available vacancies. The quota for two of the colleges in this study was approximately three quarters of the total enrolment. In other words, they wanted 372 out of the 500 vacancies to be students in their religion, as alluded to in Chapter Five. They required the quota for evangelisation purposes because all church institutions were originally established for that purpose and the same applied to teacher training colleges which were administered and sponsored by the church. To illustrate, Selection Committee Member A3 during the interview at College A commented:

The responsible authority, wants a certain percentage to be considered. The responsible authority provides a list of candidates to be considered.

From the response above, colleges operating under church authorities were under pressure. In this study it was Colleges A and C, while Colleges B and D were government sponsored. It was these community members, responsible authorities and groups of church members, which supplied at Colleges A and C a list of candidates 'to be considered' for selection. Providing a list of candidates and wanting a certain percentage to be considered may be justified when looking

at key roles and responsibilities of the religious within their churches, however, which resulted in a secondary contradiction. The contradiction arose given that according to rules and the division of labour, the subject is expected to select the most suitable candidates from those who pass the interview following the community rules. But, in the eyes of the responsible authority, the subject is expected to play the role of providing a quota and considering their list of candidates. It is this shift in the roles of the subject and community, ignoring the community rules, that creates tension and conflict between the subject, community, rules and division of labour.

Instead of assessing the individual candidate's academic capability, the selection process was influenced by who brought the student, thus, objective assessment was likely to be lost and efficiency was compromised in the process. Another negative point raised by the use of the quota system as required by the responsible authority in this study was provided by Eisenman (2018) who argues that when the quota system is practised, the dilemma is always that there are better qualified candidates not within the quota category and the quota people selected are markedly less qualified than some of the other applicants. In this case, the responsible authority's request for a quota of the total applicants was problematic as some of the very best candidates would not be members of their religion. This may have resulted in discriminating against non-religious students. Thus, this response to the demand for vacancies by the responsible authority, by demanding a quota and providing lists of candidates to be selected, was a contradiction which spiralled to subject, object, rule, division of labour and outcome. From the CHAT perspective this was a secondary contradiction in the activity system. Secondary contradictions arise within more than one node or element of one activity system (Engestrom 2001), which was the case in this scenario.

In contrast to the situation in College A above, at College C Selection Committee Member C2 during interviews said, *"Being a Christian institution, our responsible authority, the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, comes in. They are actually there to check on whether the process is going on smoothly and check whether there are any hitches."* This community responded to the demand for vacancies by ensuring a smooth selection process. This was unlike the responsible authority at College A which demanded for quota. Research indicates that sometimes demanding a quota is justified because a disadvantaged group gains from being given affirmative action. However, giving preference to less qualified persons still constitutes a contradiction and possibly makes things worse because it gives admission and privileges to those who otherwise would not qualify (Eisenman 2018). This is rewarding less qualified persons. The argument above seems

to justify the demand for a quota by the responsible authority at the same time identifying the weakness of the quota system. According to Mashininga (2019) the quota system in Malawi has to do with equity when selecting individuals into colleges but for Zimbabwe the quota system cannot be clearly justified.

From the above discussion while one responsible authority responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding a quota which they felt was their right, and giving a list of prospective students for selection by the selection committee, the other responsible authority ensured a challenge-free selection process. In the CHAT framework, community members demanded a quota from subjects and this was a secondary contradiction as explained above because it was not within rules and provisions of division of labour. Again, in the CHAT framework, while these contradictions could result in tensions, they could also possibly transform the activity systems (Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares 2008). The responsible authority conflicted or clashed with the subject and rules in two ways: first, by demanding a quota of students from their religion and second, by providing the subject with a list of candidates for consideration. These two procedures were outside the provisions of the division of labour and the community rules and, therefore, resulted in tension creating a secondary contradiction between two or more nodes.

7.5 Political stakeholders' response to the demand for vacancies

Political stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies like the responsible authority at College A above by sending lists of candidates. Colleges A, B and C faced similar dilemmas from politicians who submitted lists of prospective students to be selected. Only College D was not affected due to its urban location. Politicians believed that they had a right as the colleges were located in their constituencies and, therefore, vacancies were part of their entitlement. This was another secondary contradiction affecting different nodes of the activity system: rules, subject, community, object, and tools. Politicians seemed to side-line or overlook the value of interviews and of rules in the student selection process. It is this non-observation of rules and failure to use accepted mediational tools that created tensions between the subject, community, object and rules. During individual interviews, one subject, Selection Committee Member B2 at College B, illustrated how politicians responded to the demand for vacancies saying:

With politicians, they send their lists. It is very difficult to ignore them. We do not rely on their candidates. We usually consider

one or two from their list but the candidates must pass the interview.

The college considered candidates who passed the interview, even if a list was presented because colleges aimed at selecting the best from the pool of those eligible. Hence, in this activity system, it appears preference was given to high performers in interviews and academic performance. This was in line with the rules discussed in detail in Chapter Six, which also represents rules in CHAT. Politicians seemed to be abusing their political positions by submitting lists to the selection committee members and the Vice Principal, thereby creating contradictions. Perhaps the politicians were aware that there was no Ministry selection policy that colleges followed, but colleges developed their own guidelines. Giving preference to high performers in interview and academic performance was in accordance with the rules of the activity system and the division of labour in the community from a CHAT perspective. The three colleges A, B and C concurred that candidates from politicians were selected only if they passed the interviews and satisfied the other criteria. This was confirmed by the Vice Principal at College C who pointed out, *“Some politicians bring candidates. Our policy is very clear, if they fail, we do not consider them.”* Another subject, Selection Committee Member A2 at College A, highlighted the issue saying, *“Politicians too, submit names of relatives for consideration.”* Political stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing candidates to be selected. This was another case of gross abuse of power on the selection process which was a contradiction. This portrayed nepotism or selection patronage with no academic or professional basis to justify why colleges selected them (Omeje et al. 2016). Drawing on surveyed literature, such practice leads to high rates of poor academic performance in Universities in Nigeria and high drop-out rates (Omeje, Egwa and Adikwu 2016). This is often because low quality students may fail to meet the college’s expectations and feel out of place, consequently, they may decide to leave the college programme. From the CHAT perspective imposing candidates on the selection committees was a secondary contradiction by the community because it was against the rules and the division of labour in the activity system which affected subjects, tools, object and outcome. Politicians enhancing selection of one community group over the rest brings about a primary contradiction (Yamagata- Lynch 2010). Often, if the college did not select political candidates, vilifying selection committee members during election campaigns or at political rallies occurred. In addition, sometimes the colleges were tortured by the youth wing of the political party because the politicians often had the support of these youths. Nevertheless, Selection Committee Member D1 at College D pointed out that there were no stakeholders that influenced the selection process.

The member commented, *“Officially no. There are none. If they are there, then they will be doing it unofficially or underground.”* This response contradicts what the Vice Principal of the same college stated earlier: that there were officials who recommended candidates for consideration. This could have been caused by lack of communication or miscommunication between subjects, causing a primary contradiction. For instance, if the Principal and Vice Principal did not communicate some information on recommended candidates to the selection committee, then this triggered a primary contradiction within the node of the activity system. Absence of communication between these critical members could result in over enrolment. Drawing on surveyed literature, Gedera and Williams (2013) say that a gap in communication between two people is created due to missing information, leading to frustration and tension between subjects. In this context this, therefore, created a contradiction within the subject node viewed from the CHAT framework. Also, from the CHAT framework, the politician, a member of the community, contradicted rules, tools, roles and responsibilities of the division of labour, as well as other prospective students. The political stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies in two ways: bringing candidates and submitting names of relatives for consideration. The fourth CHAT principle, which says the central role of contradictions is as sources of change and development, links with this finding. Attempts to review the rules, processes or strategies after identifying contradictions may result in innovations and change to the system. The action by politicians of bringing candidates and submitting names of relatives created tensions which resulted in a secondary contradiction because interaction amongst subject and community is mediated through the rules (Said and Eames 2014).

7.6 Lecturers as stakeholders’ response to the demand for vacancies

Lecturers are also members of the community within the CHAT framework. These members who were not on the selection committee felt that they deserved a share in the selected students. At College C some lecturer stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing their relatives. This was exemplified by Selection Committee Member C3 who commented saying:

“Lecturers too bring their relatives. This is a challenge. We are 70 lecturers here and if each brings a relative to be enrolled, it becomes a big challenge.”

If relatives of lecturers were considered, then the aim of selecting the more capable and deserving students may be defeated, consequently, threatening teacher quality and subsequently learner achievement. Challenges like bringing relatives for consideration relate to a situation in England

where Richardson (2019) found that teacher education providers came under repeated pressure to take the kinds of candidates that they had rejected. This implies that due to pressure, students with lower qualifications were accepted for the teacher education programme at the expense of strong students who were rejected. In this study bringing relatives for consideration constituted a secondary contradiction as this was not within the division of labour and not according to the rules of the community in the activity system. Furthermore, not all applicants could exert pressure to ensure selection: only the powerfully connected candidates would be selected for teacher training. In the same vein, the idea of social connections raised earlier by some students and, also, by one vice principal, was confirmed by the above quotation. Lecturers responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing their relatives to be selected. In the CHAT framework, the lecturers, community members, brought relatives to the subject for selection. Under normal circumstances, the subject selects candidates from those who passed interviews, the mediational tool used for enacting student selection, the object within the rules of the community and division of labour. Hence, this was a contradiction because bringing relatives defied the rules of the system and was not within the division of labour. The contradiction affected the subject, community, rules and the division of labour.

Lecturer stakeholders in College A responded to the demand for vacancies by threatening to strike. Selection Committee Member A2 at College A during individual interview explained:

Yes, in our case... with lecturers sometimes threatening that they will not teach unless they get places for their relatives. So, they give lot of pressure. ...The college is left open to threats, demands and abuse, so they will bend to the demands.

Evidence above indicates that some lecturers were going to strike if subjects did not give in to their demands of getting their relatives selected. The lecturers remained resolute with their threats, maybe because the selection committee members and the Vice Principal were involved in patronage selection or corrupt practices, like selecting their own relatives. Such threats compromised the quality of students recruited for training because the fact that their relatives were not selected on the criteria stipulated suggests they were not qualified. The lecturer stakeholders in the context of the CHAT framework contradicted the rules and division of labour of the activity system by making threats and the contradiction ended up spiralling to subject, tool, object and outcome. This is consistent with literature surveyed (Machingura 2006) in Zimbabwe, which points out that principals in all colleges end up enrolling more applicants due to pressure exerted upon them from different community stakeholders within and outside colleges. This

situation implies that due to pressure colleges are forced into flouting the selection rules and regulations that are in place, which affects the quality of student teacher selected, the teacher produced and, consequently, the school learner who would be taught and, eventually, the education system. Darling-Hammond (2000) indicates that measures in student teacher selection, preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of education quality and student achievement. Another consequence of enrolling and training poorly qualified candidates is that the teaching profession may be looked down upon. Contrary to the above, Harris and Sass (2011) argue that there is not much evidence that teachers' pre-service selection, training or college entrance exam scores are related to their teaching quality and productivity. This implies that selection scores do not necessarily guarantee good quality teacher.

From the findings, above lecturers responded to the demand for vacancies by making threats which in CHAT was a secondary contradiction. Making threats was against the community rules and division of labour within the community. Again, in the CHAT framework, the community was expected to behave in a certain prescribed way following the rules laid down by the community and the norms, responsibilities and practices in the activity system, as allocated through division of labour (Wilson 2014). CHAT Principle Number 4, which states that contradictions can result in tensions but also transformation in the activity system (Engstrom 2001 cited by Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares 2008) links well with this finding because lecturers used threats to get training vacancies instead of using interviews to get their relatives selected. When the subject and community decide to join and cooperate to push the old ways out and adopt new ones, then change and transformation is realised. The use of force resulted in tensions, leading to contradictions affecting the subject, community, rules and object. In relation to how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies, stakeholders in the community of surrounding villages also made some demands for vacancies.

7.7 Local surrounding village stakeholders' response to demand for vacancies

In line with the dynamics of entry into teachers' colleges, the surrounding village stakeholders community from the CHAT perspective responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding vacancy allocation. For the purpose of this discussion surrounding villages' stakeholders meant local members who were church parishioners and parents living around the colleges. The surrounding village stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding a percentage of the places because the college was situated in their rural area. Two colleges, A and

C, were affected. For example, Selection Committee Member A3 at College A during individual interviews pointed out, *“The community wants a certain percentage of vacancies.”* The demand implied that a fixed number of the students was to be selected from the surrounding villages. This may have arisen from what the local community perceived as a disproportionately high number of admissions of students from outside the locality. This view portrays discrimination against non-local candidates. Mashininga (2019), in relation to Malawi, points out that the quota system is discriminatory and in violation of the fundamental rights of citizens. Although the quota system sounds noble, this would deny qualified students from outside the locality a chance to train. At the same time this also means depriving local students’ exposure to and the experience of different environments, as well as socialising and living harmoniously with different cultures (Kataka 2014). Often local candidates attended local schools and then proceeded to the local teachers’ college and may be deployed in the local schools after training. Consequently, such teachers end up with closed minds (Kataka 2014). However, the demand for a percentage of vacancies by the villagers was not problematic in this study as apparently the surrounding areas did not have many young people to be selected into each intake of students. From the CHAT perspective this was a contradiction because the surrounding villages, by demanding a quota did not follow the procedure but broke the rules of the community: demanding a percentage was not within the division of labour. Procedure requires that surrounding villages should abide by the activity system community rules and work in accordance with the division of labour. In this regard, the subject and the community differed in the way they viewed procedure and the approach to student selection and this difference affected all other nodes, including the tools, object, rules and division of labour. Thus, the surrounding villages, like the government officials, religious and politicians responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding a percentage of the available vacancies.

7.8 Chiefs as stakeholders’ response to the demand for vacancies

Chiefs who represent community members in CHAT emerged as another category of stakeholders who also responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing their relatives. The three colleges, A, B and C that fell under the jurisdiction of chiefs gave similar stories of the said behaviour. At the time of this study, in Zimbabwe chiefs were generally regarded highly because of the political standing offered them by government. As such they bred and induced fear wherever they went including in the institutions. Traditionally chiefs were the custodians of the land on which the colleges were built. The fact that chiefs were highly regarded

seemingly gave them confidence to bully and bring their relatives to colleges. This was an abuse of power and breach of guiding college rules and community division of labour in the activity system regarding student selection. During individual interviews a subject, Selection Committee Member C3, at College C said, *“We have Chief-H and Chief-M within the environs. These people bring their relatives.”* College C was situated on communal land which was overseen by two chiefs who both claimed ownership of and benefits from the college. As such, they apparently viewed themselves as entitled to impose their relatives for selection into the colleges. Selection Committee Member A2 at College A commented, *“The chief would say have this list of names to consider. So, the college has no option, but to comply.”* The common feature among the chiefs was like that of other stakeholders, including surrounding villages, politicians, lecturers, government officials and the religious discussed above, who demanded vacancies, for their relatives. This action was likely to compromise standards and begged questions regarding the process and nature of students recruited and trained. Drawing on literature surveyed, in relation to complying with chiefs’ demands, Camara and Kimmel (2005) point out that this is the atmosphere of valuing the wrong things where people admit applicants with powerful advocates rather than students who show promise of making the best use of the institution’s resources. Thus, from the responses, colleges were recruiting students who were advocated for by various stakeholders and not on merit. Viewing this in the CHAT framework, the chiefs as community abused their power by bringing their relatives to the subjects for selection, thus, disregarding community rules and failing to work within the dictates of division of labour. Bringing relatives to the subject for selection created a secondary contradiction because it affected more than two nodes of the activity system: subject, object, rules, community, tools and division of labour (Jones 2014).

From the discussion above, chiefs created contradiction of the subject and community, rules and tools, as well as the object by bringing their relatives and submitting lists of names for consideration. Secondary contradiction emerged because conflict affected more than two nodes of the activity system (Scheckle 2014). In this case, chiefs created situations where component forces acted in contradiction to each other. In trying to find a common object, carrying out genuine reviews and reflections on the activity system could lead to innovation, change and development.

7.9 Summary

This chapter addressed the question: how stakeholders, in this case community members in CHAT, responded to the demand for vacancies. From the discussion above, stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies in different ways. First of all, student stakeholders responded by applying for vacancies in response to advertisements for places, reacting to selection interview invitation letters, attending selection interviews and some unsuccessful candidates responded by paying fees or by complaining. Secondly, government officials, also community members, responded to the demand for vacancies by submitting requests and recommending candidates for selection. Thirdly, religious community members responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding quotas and submitting lists of candidates for selection. Fourthly, politicians, also as community members, responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding quotas and bringing relatives. Fifthly, lecturers responded to the demand for vacancies by threatening to strike and bringing their relatives. Sixthly, surrounding villages, also community members, responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding vacancies. Finally, chiefs responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing relatives. As a researcher and VP of a participating college, I would not be surprised about how community members and stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies because that seemed to have been happening in all colleges.

All 40 student teacher stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by submitting application letters in response to advertisements for vacancies. Four students wrote one application letter before they got places for training and 36 students submitted at least two application letters before they were invited for interviews (see Table 11 above). Another major finding was that there was very stiff competition for places, for instance, 25 candidates out of 40, submitted four or five application letters before they were invited for interviews. In the CHAT framework submitting application letters by the student teachers was in accordance with the division of labour, as this would enable the subject to perform their duty using these mediational tools. Of those who were invited for interviews and later selected 28 students across all the colleges explored responded to invitation letters with joy, excitement and happiness because they had applied more than three times before being invited for interviews. While many responded with joy, some responded with fear, doubt and anxiety. From the CHAT perspective fear, doubt and anxiety portrayed secondary contradictions as they did not behave according to expected norms and practices (Mukeredzi 2009; Waite 2006). During

selection interview observation sessions, I noted both joyful and anxious candidates during the interviews.

One key finding was that 26 students responded to the demand for vacancies by attending four and five or more selection interviews at different institutions throughout the country before they could get a vacancy because of the huge demand (about 8 000 Applicants) and competition for the few (500) vacancies available. However, two students attended only one selection interview. Within the CHAT theoretical framework attending selection interviews by the student teachers was within the division of labour as expected by the community as students enacted the object, using mediation tools. In addition to applying to different colleges, some candidates from College C responded to the demand for vacancies by paying fees, enacting the object before being accepted. Within the CHAT framework paying fees before the offer of a vacancy was a contradiction because the prospective student paid fees before receiving the offer letter. They breached community rules and went against the division of labour. This act would constrain the subject to enact the object and it worked against the achievement of the intended outcome. The prospective student was expected to abide by the community rules, that is, to attend interviews and successfully fulfil the requirements, as well as work within the division of labour.

Other unsuccessful candidates responded to the demand for vacancies by complaining about not being offered vacancies after attending several selection interviews at a particular college. On the other hand, some students were selected because they had connections in the colleges.

Besides students other community members, such as government official stakeholders, responded to the demand for vacancies by recommending candidates for selection. These recommendations were considered because officials were the employers of all college staff. In the CHAT framework recommending candidates by government officials was a contradiction as it was outside rules and in conflict with division of labour in the activity system. This was a secondary contradiction affecting the subject, community, object, rules, tools and division of labour. Meanwhile, the religious responsible authority, also community members, responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding quotas and bringing lists of candidates. From the CHAT perspective this was a contradiction as this was outside rules and division of labour. Their actions interfered with subjects, object, and tools. The demands by the responsible authority were respected, as the religious candidates were required for evangelisation.

The other three categories of community stakeholders – lecturers, chiefs, politicians and the surrounding villages – responded to the demand for vacancies either by using their political ‘muscle’ or threats. Politicians put pressure on the subjects by bringing relatives. At the same time lecturers responded by threatening to strike if their relatives were not selected. Furthermore, chiefs responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding allocations of vacancies through bullying, inducing fear and bringing their relatives for selection because the colleges were on their land. Meanwhile, the surrounding villages demanded vacancies. Three of the colleges studied experienced demands by politicians. In the CHAT framework the demand for quotas by community members was partially considered, notwithstanding that they were creating contradictions as the community members breached community rules and this was against the division of labour and constrained the subject in enacting the object to achieve the outcome.

From the diverse responses to the demand for vacancies by different stakeholders, it would appear that the practice of setting up rules and regulations and adhering to them was like window dressing applied for a few applicants but not for all. This is so because only those candidates not linked to powerful stakeholders went through the selection process: other candidates associated with powerful stakeholders were scaffold through the process. Given that corruption emerged in the selection, it is not clear whether senior management in these colleges gave in to and accepted the corrupt tendencies. However, given that some of the stakeholders came through them and handed the lists to them, this suggests that in some ways they accepted corruption.

This chapter discussed how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies. The next chapter synthesises the findings and discusses the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION, SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the processes of student teacher entry into teacher education in selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The world over, every country tries to choose the best teachers for their education systems. Choosing or selecting student teachers for teacher training represents a critical part of teacher education because the selection process is meant to maintain standards by ensuring that suitable candidates join teacher training programmes (Lukas and Samardzic 2015) and to strengthen the teaching workforce (Klassen et al. 2017; Jacob 2016). However, there seems to be no consensus on to how to select and who to select (Anderson and Stallman 2013; Caskey et al. 2001; Falkenberg 2010) for initial teacher education.

Teacher training student selection is of great importance for bringing those applicants who are the most suitable for the teaching profession into teacher education programmes (Mankki and Raiha 2020). Selection into teacher education is necessary to ensure quality education, given that teachers are the most important factor in student learning and student achievement. Thus, given that discourse on student teacher selection into teacher training worldwide has raised numerous questions regarding who to select and how to select (Klassen et al. 2019 and Boon 2017), this makes developing an understanding of student teacher selection into selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe worthwhile. As the student teachers explored in this investigation constitute pre-service teachers entering teacher education, exploring them locates this enquiry within broader debates on teacher supply and demand, teacher recruitment and EFA commitments.

The idea of student teacher selection might appear simple but there are lots of processes involved before student teachers can be enrolled. Transforming aspiring candidates into enrolled students is a complex process that involves the interaction of various stakeholders who constitute the community, subjects, including various artefacts, rules, object and division of labour in the CHAT perspective, as explained in Chapter Three. This encompasses engagement with other processes within the activity system. Like other countries in the world, Zimbabwe tries to select the most qualified applicants for teacher education. The need for rigorous and

effective student teacher selection in Zimbabwe has been necessitated by huge numbers of unemployed youths, O level and A Level graduates and retrenchees due to the economic meltdown witnessed since 2008. This gave rise to stiff competition for teacher education vacancies as highlighted in Chapter One. The economy has seen industries folding and retrenchments scaling up, leaving thousands of the unemployed looking at teacher training as the only window of hope for employment following graduation (Mukeredzi 2016; Mlambo 2017). Given this situation, Zimbabwean teacher training colleges were left with no option but to select a few candidates deemed to be the best quality from an enormous pool of eligible applicants.

In this study four selected primary teacher training colleges were involved: two government colleges, both located in urban settings but in different provinces, and the other two under church governance, the Catholic Church and Reformed Church in Zimbabwe respectively. These two were in one province but in different rural districts. All four institutions trained junior (general) Primary school and Early Childhood Development teachers.

The study revolved around the key question: *What are the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in selected teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe?* To answer this key question, three sub-questions need to be answered. These are:

- 1) *What mediational tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges?*
- 2) *What rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?*
- 3) *How do stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies for teacher training?*

Using data generated from participants to address the above research questions enabled understanding and explaining the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education. The three preceding chapters, Five, Six and Seven, presented findings that answered the research questions. Chapter Five discussed the various mediational tools used in selecting student teachers into teachers' colleges. The results suggested that the selected colleges employed a diverse range of mediational tools and artefacts to select student teachers. Among the major ones were SMS messages, interviews and computers for data storage. Chapter Six addressed the rules that guided the student selection. The findings suggested that colleges were guided by a variety of college 'grown' guidelines and among these were prior academic performance, minimum requirements as stipulated by the ministry and personal attributes, like communication skills. Chapter Seven discussed how stakeholders responded to the demand for

vacancies where it emerged that stakeholders responded in various forms that encompassed demanding quotas, giving subjects lists of candidates for consideration, threatening subjects, cheating, paying fees before receiving vacancy offers and corrupt activities like bribery and prior release of entrance tests. Drawing on the findings presented in the preceding three chapters, this chapter explains the student teacher entry into teacher education. It analyses, discusses and synthesises results explaining the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education in the four selected primary teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The chapter is organized into six sections. Firstly, following this introduction, the theoretical and methodological reflections are outlined. This is followed by a review of the study where I briefly discuss the contents of each chapter. Then, a discussion of findings follows where findings for each research question are examined and discussed. There follows the original contribution of the study. Finally, implications and lessons from this study are drawn. Following this is the conclusion of the discussion chapter. The next section, therefore, outlines my theoretical and methodological reflections.

8.2 Theoretical and methodological reflections on the study

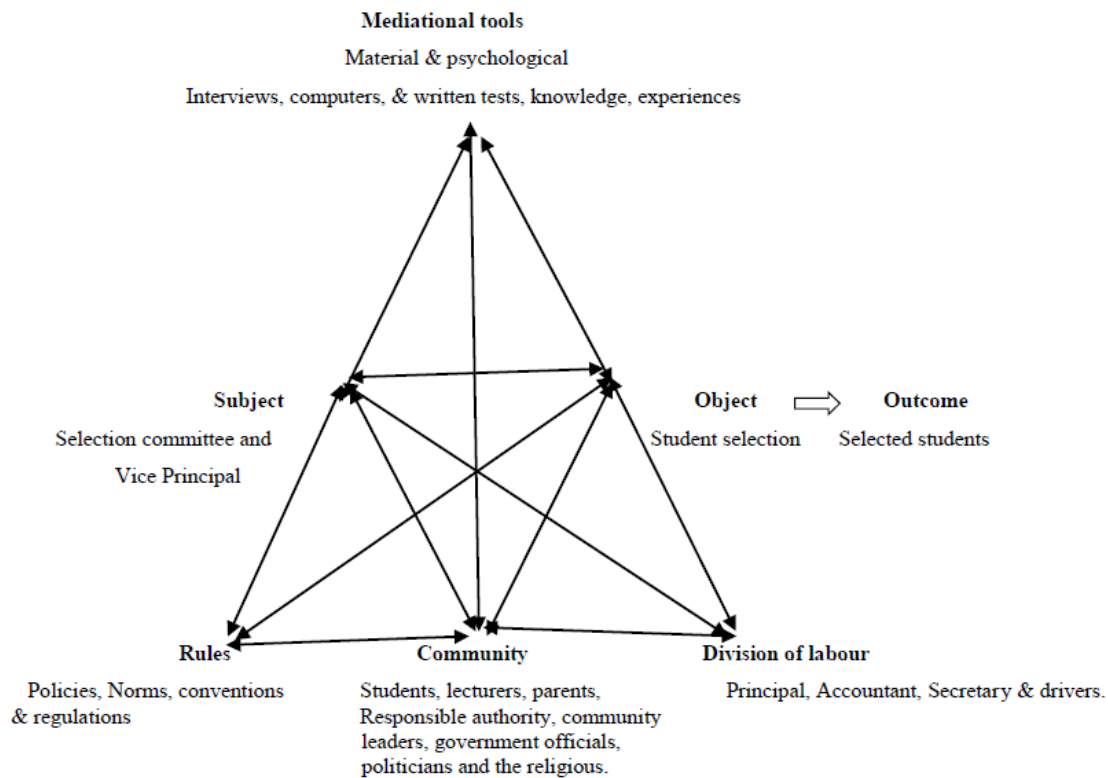
With regard to theory, this study employed the CHAT framework complemented by Funnel theory to guide data generation and analysis and to understand and explain the findings. The effectiveness of CHAT in this study was based on three reasons. Firstly, using the CHAT triangle revealed hidden relations between elements and illustrated the interdependence of the nodes of the activity system. Effective functioning of the system depended on the effectiveness of each node as allocated by the division of labour. For instance, the community (college) allocated duties to individuals and group members according to their training, expertise and skills through the division of labour. In that respect, allocation of roles and responsibilities ensured that elements like subjects were able to enact the object (selecting students) resulting in achievement of the intended outcome (selected students). The relationships and interaction of the nodes are clearly shown diagrammatically in Figure 14. This visual illustration enhanced my understanding and presentation of findings. The interaction and interdependence of the six CHAT elements illustrated in Figure 14 demonstrated that student selection was a collective process with intimate relations across elements to achieve the outcome. I learnt that failure of one element was failure of the whole activity system and, therefore, the effectiveness, professionalism and ethics of each element were critical.

Secondly, CHAT was effective in revealing contradictions which were exemplified by unprofessional and unethical or corrupt practices by some subjects. The different types of contradictions that emerged clearly pointed to areas that needed improvement or modification to enhance the student selection process.

Thirdly, the CHAT framework, enabled me to identify all the six nodes (elements) practically in the student selection activity system, their roles and responsibilities according to the division of labour, and to match and compare them within and across the research sites – the colleges. This was in line with Wilson (2014) who argues that CHAT enables us to identify; who (subject) does what to whom/what (object), using what (tools) in what circumstances (rules, community, division of labour, where, when). I was able to identify the subject as the selection committee members and the vice principals with their main responsibility, according to division of labour, as selection of student teachers (object) for the teacher education programme guided by community guidelines (rules) as expected by the division of labour (management structure of that institution). I was able to identify the tools, including the database, computers, SMS, interviews and written tests. The community element consisting of principals, parents, students, chiefs, politicians, religious, and college support staff was also identified.

While elsewhere CHAT has been used to understand learning, assessment and how teachers seek and share in peer to peer professional development network (Asghar 2013; Wilson 2014; Trust 2017), the theory has also been used to understand teacher professional learning (Mukeredzi 2009; Feldman 2012) and issues around HIV/AIDS (Maraka 2019; van der Riet 2011). In this study CHAT proved to be an effective and flexible lens to understand the selection of student teachers into teacher education. Figure 8.1 illustrates the six elements of activity theory that constitute the activity system.

Figure 8.1: Activity Theory



Source: Researcher Adapted from Mukeredzi (2009).

However, in using CHAT I was initially unclear of the meaning of contradictions. It was difficult to identify and define appropriately and accurately the different types of contradictions that emerged. However, with more reading, discussion and consultations with my supervisor, it became clearer and I was able to accurately define, align and explain the contradictions. Another challenge was that I realized that the framework did not trace the enrolment journey pursued by students from advertisements for training vacancies to admission and enrolment. Consequently, I examined literature around student teacher selection. I then found a complementary framework, Funnel Theory, with five stages which would help me trace and analyse the journey travelled by prospective students from examining advertisement stage, inquiry stage, through the applicant stage, admission stage and finally to student enrolment. This framework enabled me to understand potential students' journeys. However, some students by-passed the inquiry and applicant stages and only appeared in the last two stages, the admission and the enrolment stages. Such students were explained by CHAT as stealth students who were not procedurally admitted but either used powerful influential stakeholders or adopted corrupt practices which were contradictions. However, such corrupt or unethical

tendencies which created secondary contradictions, like demanding quotas by chiefs, politicians and the surrounding community and paying for vacancies, needed to be identified and addressed.

8.2.1 Methodological reflections

In this interpretive-qualitative study the aim was to understand the dynamics of entry into teacher education by pre-service teachers. A multiple-site case study design (Creswell 2014) was employed to develop an understanding of the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education. This was enhanced by generating in-depth data through multi-modal data generating techniques: face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and observation (Yin 2018). The multiple-site case study design enabled me to compare and understand similarities and dissimilarities across colleges and allowed me to identify possible patterns in the data. However, travelling from one site to another proved costly in terms of time and money. The use of a multiple-site case studies design, however, allowed replication and comparisons which enhanced the robustness of my findings (Yin 2016). In addition, data from four research sites allowed me to capture multiple views and perspectives held by different participants (Cohen et al. 2011): student teachers, lecturers and vice principals. The evidence generated from a multiple case study is strong and reliable (Gustafsson 2017). However, multiple perspectives proved difficult to interpret and give meaning (Yin 2014) and I realised that complete consensus was difficult to achieve (Yamashita and Moonen 2014) and so presented findings per site. The multiple site case studies design provided me the opportunity to generate rich data direct from the primary sources without taking participants out of context (Krusenvik 2016). I learnt that direct contact with participants creates rapport and trust. Notwithstanding the contradictions, the multiple-site case studies design was effective in enabling me to understand the dynamics of student teacher entry into teacher education from the four selected research sites explored.

8.3 Review of the study

This study is composed of eight chapters which are summarised below.

8.3.1 Chapter One

The chapter introduced the study and gave a background to the dynamics of entry into teacher education by pre-service student teachers into Zimbabwean teachers' colleges. In the chapter the focus and purpose, rationale, context, overview of the theoretical approach and overview of the methodological approach were discussed. A rationale was provided to justify the study and show the gap that this study was contributing to filling. A summary of the methodological approach and theoretical frameworks was also provided.

8.3.2 Chapter Two

Employing a conceptual approach, the literature review chapter discussed relevant and related literature in which I identified gaps to which my study could contribute to further justify the study. On the global level, reviewed literature showed that several mediational tools, like standard admission tests, interviews, written tests and practical examinations, were used to select student teachers into teachers' colleges (Lynagh et al. 2018). Regionally and locally interviews and academic record tools were employed. With regards to the rules guiding student selection, reviewed literature showed that across the globe in countries like Australia, Finland and Singapore (OECD 2013) policies guided student teacher selection. Meanwhile regionally, in Malawi an admission policy guided student selection even into secondary schools (Sandikonda 2013). Literature on Zimbabwe did not reveal any policies that guided student teacher selection. Finally, regarding how stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies, reviewed literature indicated that cheating, buying vacancies and paying bribes characterised/dominated stakeholders' responses across the global, regional and local contexts. Both the tools used to select students and rules guiding the selection of students into colleges were examined against elements of the CHAT framework which I employed in this study.

8.3.3 Chapter Three

This chapter presented and discussed two theoretical frameworks that guided this study: CHAT and Funnel Theory. The historical development of the two theories, including the first proponents, were discussed. The discussion also included the principles and application of the two theories to this study. The two theoretical frameworks were adopted for understanding the dynamics of entry into teacher education. Surveyed literature reflects CHAT as a theoretical

framework for understanding and explaining human activity (Trust 2017) while funnel theory illustrates and traces prospective students' journeys from viewing the advertisement to the enrolment stage, which CHAT would be unable to do, as such a complementary theory was necessary.

8.3.4 Chapter Four

In this chapter the interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach and multiple-site case study design were discussed and their choices justified. This was followed by a description of the population sampling methods. Following this, data generation methods and processes that included individual interviews, focus group discussion and observation were discussed. Then the steps followed in data analysis were outlined. The chapter was concluded by discussing the trustworthiness of the study findings under dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability, as well as ethical issues considered throughout the study.

8.3.5 Chapter Five

The chapter presented and analysed data addressing Research Question One about mediation tools used in student selection processes. The tools that emerged from the findings included computer database, SMSs for sending messages, interviews and interview schedules, written tests, word of mouth, print and social media. A number of contradictions that emerged in the data were highlighted and discussed under Question One in the discussion section below.

8.3.6 Chapter Six

This chapter presented and analysed data that answered Research Question Two about rules that guided student selection into teachers' colleges. Academic and non-academic qualifications including public service regulations, dress code, a pass in science and in an indigenous language were identified as the guidelines that colleges studied used for student selection into the selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. Some contradictions which emerged in the data were also discussed.

8.3.7 Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven presented and analysed data addressing Research Question Three on stakeholders' responses to the demand for vacancies. Findings showed divergent responses to the demand for vacancies. Stakeholders' responses included applying to different colleges, receiving selection interview invitations, attending selection interviews, cheating, buying vacancies, paying fees before receiving acceptance letters, recommending candidates, demanding quotas, bringing relatives and threatening selection committee members. While the bulk of the applicants 'religiously' followed acceptable procedures, the highlighted findings deviated from the expected practices creating secondary contradictions which Mukeredzi (2009) and Waite (2006) view as going against acceptable practices in the activity system.

8.3.8 Chapter Eight

This present chapter discusses and summarises major findings, draws conclusions, discusses contributions of this study, before tendering some recommendations. The discussion section is organised around research questions and begins by discussing findings addressing Question One.

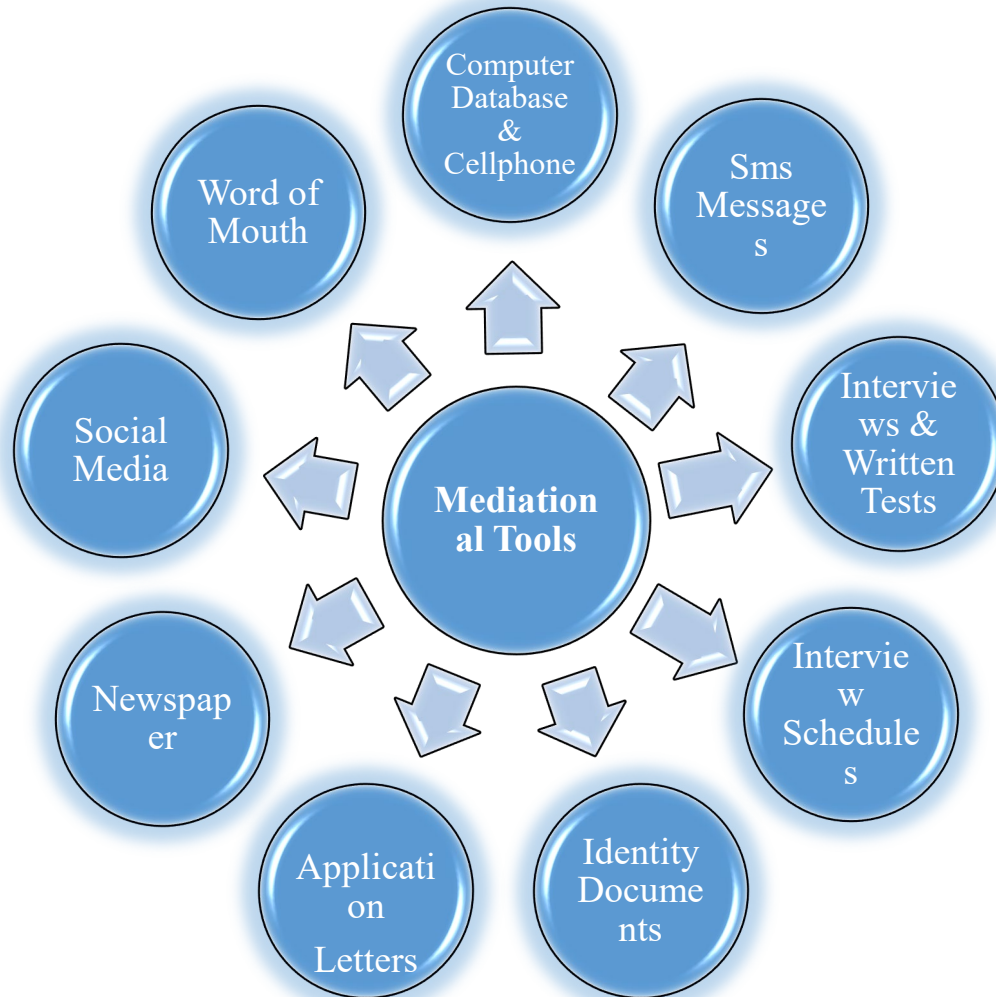
8.4 Discussion of findings

What mediational tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges?

In answer to this question findings showed that a variety of tools were used, including computer database for storing information for future retrieval, interviews for selecting suitable candidates, cell phone and SMS (for sending messages to invite candidates for interviews), written tests for assessing the candidates on various aspects to complement oral interviews, interview schedules to ensure question uniformity, print and social media for advertising teacher training vacancies and providing information for teacher training and word of mouth used to pass information on training vacancies in colleges. The diverse mediation tools were probably due to different contexts in which colleges were situated and the different sponsors/responsible authorities' running the institutions. Well-sponsored colleges were well equipped technologically and had adequate human resources. The use of various tools is consistent with reviewed literature where Darmody and Smyth (2016) indicate that different

countries use a variety of selection filters (mediation tools) to select students. Figure 8.2 below reflects the mediational tools that emerged in this study.

Figure 8.2: Mediational tools used in student selection



Source: Researcher 2021

While this study found the above list of mediational tools for student selection, some reviewed literature is contrary to these findings. In the U.S.A and Canada mediational tools used in student selection include written profiles, recommendations, entrance examinations, standardised tests, demonstrations of leadership and of communication skills, practical examinations, interviews and academic performance (Casey et al. 2007; Lukas and Samardzic 2015). In this study interviews and academic performance emerged as important mediational tools employed in student selection. Thus, in this study tools were those resources defined by Gedera (2014). The concept of mediation tools is when human beings come across an object (a stimulus) in the environment and do not act on it directly: through the facilitation or

intermediation of tools, resources or knowledge they can achieve their objective. This was the case in this study where a cell phone was used to reach prospective students. From the CHAT perspective, mediation tools in my study were either material or psychological (Mukeredzi 2009). The subjects (selection committee members and vice principals) used both material and psychological mediation tools to enact the object and achieve the intended outcome (Joo 2014).

8.4.1 Computer database and cell phone

In this study, these artefacts enabled subjects to enact the object. The computer databases as mediational tools/artefacts were for recording and storing data, while the cell phone was used to send and receive messages. Findings indicated that biographical data for all the applicants was captured and stored in the database by the college secretaries soon after receipt of applications. Firstly, this process was necessary to account for all applicants and also for future reference. Secondly, the computer database stored year to year records to help determine trends, which assisted in planning for learning venues. From the funnel theory, capturing data into the database takes place during the second stage of the journey of the prospective student – the inquiries stage (Zinn and Johansson 2015). Although only three colleges mentioned the use of computer databases, such use of the computer and cell phone was common across all colleges.

8.4.2 SMS messages

Findings also show that SMS messages served as a tool. It was through the computer that SMS messages from colleges were sent to applicants and the applicants received these messages through their cell phones. In this study, selection interview invitation messages and acceptances letters were sent from, delivered and received through cell phones. Drawing from surveyed literature Mulliner and Muiller (2010) point out that SMS is an unreliable service because messages can be delayed or discarded for no reason. In spite of the unreliability, the use of SMS messages was common across all colleges perhaps because it was simple and fast. In the CHAT framework, the messages enabled subjects to enact the object which facilitated achievement of the outcome in accordance to the division of labour (Wilson 2014). Drawing from the funnel theory those coming for interviews were applicants on Stage Three (Copeland 2009).

8.4.3 Interviews and written tests

Findings also revealed that at College D selection committee members (subjects) used material mediational tools (oral interviews and written tests) to select student teachers into teachers' colleges. The use of written tests suggested that College D viewed interviews alone as inadequate for student selection. The three other participating colleges used the 10-minute interview only. Findings indicate that subjects across the four institutions selected those candidates who scored high marks in oral interviews. Notwithstanding the use of interviews across all colleges, some students argued that this tool was not effective in determining student teacher attributes. Reviewed literature consistent with this finding shows that interviews are ineffective due to subjectivity of judgment as they tend to assess personality rather than ability to do the job (Challen 2004). This suggests that interviews served the intended purpose to select smart students. However, while some participants indicated that interviews were difficult, others pointed out that they were a 'walk over'. It also emerged that some participants had either previously attended interviews with similar questions or had been tipped off about interview content. Drawing on reviewed literature as alluded to in Chapter Five, Clandinin and Husa (2017) point out that prior sharing of interview questions is a problem where some people may distort responses. In such cases, candidates pretend to be smart by providing correct answers when in actual fact they have been tipped. Within the CHAT framework, sharing questions was a secondary contradiction as it was against the community rules of the activity system. Notwithstanding, interviews remained a major material mediational tool across all colleges to assess non-academic attributes which were difficult to determine. From the CHAT perspective, subjects used interview material mediational tools to enact the object and to achieve the outcome in accordance with the division of labour (Wilson 2014).

The use of written tests which emerged at one college may be viewed as a secondary contradiction within the community, given this lack of uniformity in the tools for student selection across colleges. Within the CHAT framework, the use of material mediational tools facilitated the enactment of the object by the subject leading to the achievement of the outcome (Joo 2014). Surveyed literature shows that a combination of mediational tools is more powerful than one (Blunt 2009). Further literature shows that written tests in students' selection for teaching programmes is popular in Finland, Japan, Israel, Australia and Korea (Lukas and Samardzic 2015). This suggests that the interview material mediational tool needs to be complemented by other tools. Findings also revealed that across colleges, interviews as the

material mediational tools were used together with academic performance. Drawing on related literature, written tests coupled with a practical observed clinical activity replicating school situations and an interview were used in Finland for student teacher selection (Sahlberg 2010).

8.4.4 Interview schedules

In addition to the material mediational tools discussed above, interview schedules were used. The structured questions were necessary for standardisation and for ensuring that subjects kept within the required parameters of the interviews. Reviewed literature indicates that interview schedules employ standardised and explicit questions which do not allow for veering off the question (Franses, Coughlan and Croni 2009). Interview schedules were used across all colleges. From the CHAT perspective, subjects used material mediational tools to enact an object to achieve the intended outcome in line with the division of labour (Wilson 2014).

8.4.5 Identity documents

Evidence also showed identity cards, birth certificates and academic certificates as material mediational tools which were used for authentication in student selection. This was consistent with surveyed literature where countries, particularly in Latin America, officially require a birth certificate to enrol students (Hunter 2019). Proof of identity is meant to minimise identity fraud (Teaching Council in Zealand 2019). However, findings revealed that there were variations in the documents required by different institutions. For instance, at the Catholic institution, a baptism certificate for baptised Catholics was required for statistical purposes while Colleges A and C required a marriage certificate if applicants indicated their marital status as married. Given that all selected colleges offered the same qualification and were under the same ministry, one would expect common student selection requirements. Within the CHAT framework, these variations created a secondary contradiction in student selection.

8.4.6 Application letters

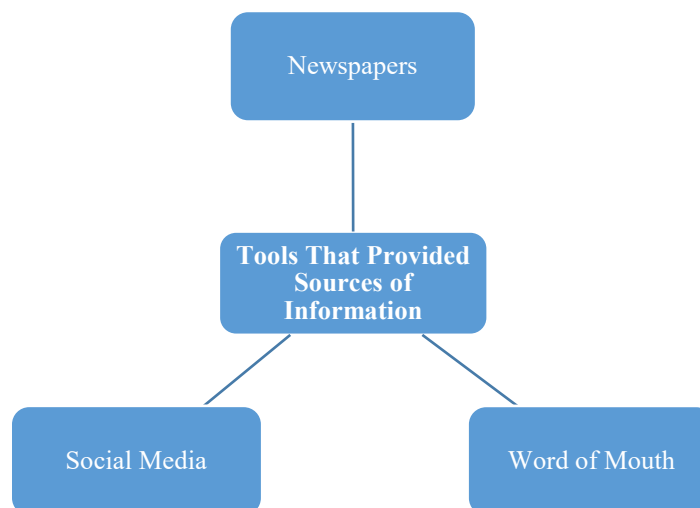
Further, findings revealed that all colleges used application letters, while the two missionary institutions required recommendation letters as additional mediating tools. This is consistent with surveyed literature where in the USA and Australia, given the huge numbers of applications, selection processes involve an initial application form or letter (Raidal et al. 2019)

which reflects one’s uniqueness (Clandinin and Husa 2017). While applicants with such recommendation letters had an added advantage, in this study, there were too many letters for anyone to read. Findings revealed that the subjects had problems assessing candidates on different levels, those with and those without recommendation letters. Notwithstanding that all colleges used application letters, it also emerged that authenticating recommendation letters from diverse referees was a challenge. Drawing from the CHAT perspective, the lack of uniformity in selection mediational tools created a secondary contradiction because this was against community rules and expectations.

8.4.7 Tools that provided information

Other mediational tools emerged as sources of information: newspapers, social media and word of mouth which are illustrated in Figure 8.3 below.

Figure 8.3: Tools that provided information



Source: Researcher 2012

8.4.8 Newspaper

From the data, it was through newspapers that all colleges in Zimbabwe advertised training vacancies. Findings revealed that the majority of applicants (28 out of 40) across colleges obtained information about vacancies from the newspaper. This could be because newspapers are accessible to many people. In line with reviewed literature Joseph (2017) argues that print media is an easy medium to spread awareness or advertise in any particular geographical area.

These findings contradict those of Zinn and Johansson (2015) who contend that Twitter and Facebook have become the most popular for student recruitment globally. Zinn and Johnson's observations were based on developed contexts where technological platforms were abundantly accessible. Drawing from the CHAT theoretical framework, subjects used newspaper advertisements as mediational tools to reach applicants. Subsequently, the subjects processed the applications to enable action on the object to achieve the outcome.

8.4.9 Social media

Findings also indicated that candidates who could not access newspapers got information from social media platforms like WhatsApp. Like the newspaper, this tool emerged across all colleges with more popularity in the urban institutions due to internet availability. Reviewed literature indicates that WhatsApp promotes media sharing of safe information and is secure from leaking (Choudhury 2019; Raima, Antbring and Mahood 2017). However, in Zimbabwe at the time of this study, there was limited availability of internet connectivity due to frequent load shedding: as such, WhatsApp access was limited.

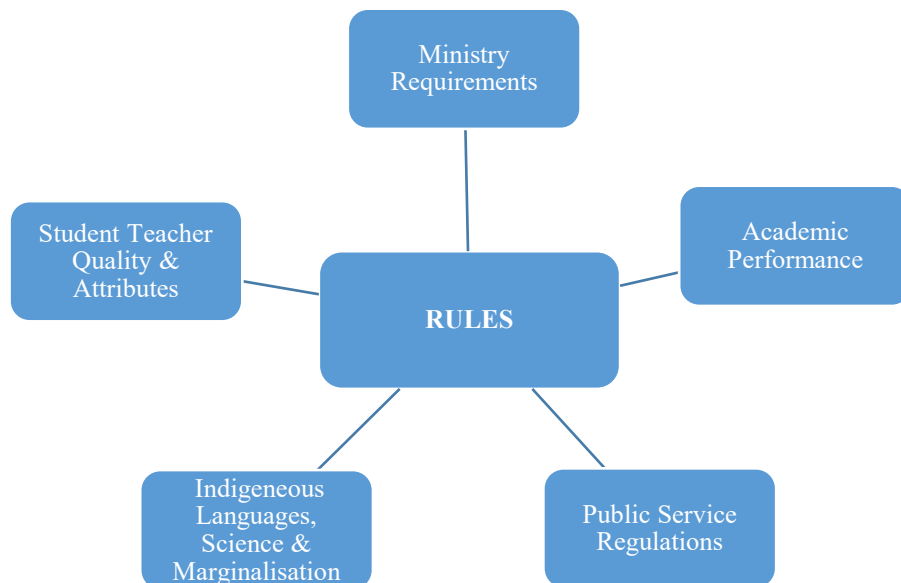
8.4.10 Word of mouth

Findings also revealed word of mouth as another effective source of information for teacher training vacancies. Verbal communication conveys intent and ensures accuracy in human interaction although misinterpretation often leads to poor results (Jones 2019). This was the most cost-effective source of information. Surveyed literature indicates that poorly worded verbal communication can lead not only to distortion of the facts but also to distortion of thoughts and intentions (Jones 2019). In this study, while word of mouth was common at College D, it was the least preferred mediational tool across all colleges explored.

From the discussion above, in answer to Research Question One, it can be concluded that mediational tools employed in student selection across colleges include computer database, interviews, interview schedules, SMSs, newspapers, social media and word of mouth. Computer database, interviews and interview schedules, SMSs, application letters, newspapers, social media and word of mouth were common across all the selected colleges. At College D written tests were additional mediational tool for student selection.

The next section discusses answers to Research Question Two around rules for student selection, answering the question: *What rules guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges?* The rules are reflected in Figure 8.4 below.

Figure 8.4: Rules that guided student selection



Source: Researcher 2021

This study discovered that there was no ministry policy to guide the student selection process into teacher training colleges. This finding supports literature consulted (Machingura 2006) that there was no Ministry Policy on student selection. From the CHAT framework the absence of ministry policy was a secondary contradiction as it was generally expected that student selection would be guided by policy from the Ministry of Higher Education. Thus, from a CHAT perspective, the community failed to perform its role as assigned by the division of labour. This, therefore, left the different institutions to develop their own guidelines. Reviewed literature (AITSL 2015; Pokozeki 2016; OECD 2013) in support of ministry policy states that there should be a national policy that guides the selection process. This was common in countries like Finland, Singapore and Australia. The emergence of various college-specific guidelines in this study gave rise to lack of standardisation and diverse approaches to the management of student selection by colleges which may have contributed to corrupt tendencies that were noted in this study.

Findings indicated that ministry requirements, including academic performance, Public Service Regulations, college guidelines, and student teacher quality and attributes were the rules that

guided student selection into teacher education in the selected colleges. These rules/guidelines are discussed below.

8.5 Ministry requirements

The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education stipulated the requirements for entry into teacher education and other civil professions as five O level passes that include English and Mathematics at Grade C or better, as explained in Chapter One. The minimum Ministry requirements as defined in Chapter One emerged as one of the guidelines for student selection across the four colleges. With regard to English language, reviewed literature shows that English is one of the critical subjects that cannot be substituted as stipulated by the language policy in Zimbabwe where from Grade 4 English is the medium of instruction (UNICEF 2016). Reviewed literature indicates that English is a global language used in socio-economic, cultural and geo-political matters which is the gateway into employment in both the public and the private sector (Chivhanga and Chinhenga 2015). It is for this reason that English was stipulated as a minimum requirement. Consulted literature also shows that Mathematics is critical for employment and career readiness (Larson 2018). Minimum requirements were, therefore, a standard across all colleges studied. Surveyed literature indicates that a basic standard of entry is achieved to maintain teacher quality and programme and institution reputation when a certain level of entry requirement is upheld (Brinkworth 2017). Within the CHAT theoretical framework minimum requirements was a rule that guided subjects in enacting the object to achieve the intended outcome (Trust 2017).

8.5.1 Academic performance

Concomitant to minimum requirements, the study found that academic performance or the quality of the 5 O level passes was another rule guiding student teacher selection. The selection committee members across all the colleges explored first considered candidates with the highest symbols: As or Bs. From surveyed literature, William (2018) and Chireshe et al. (2009) support consideration of academic performance or quality of symbols in student selection for entry into Zimbabwean universities. However, Swanepoel and Moll (2004) argue that prior academic performance is not the single best predictor of success with postgraduate studies. Moreover, from a medical source, Bandiera et al. (2015) show that selection criteria should go beyond grades to encompass professionalism, heart and attitudes compatible with practice. This

implies that while academic grades should be considered in student selection processes, they may not predict efficiency and effectiveness as a teacher. From the CHAT framework, while academic performance was a rule that guided subjects in all colleges to enact the object to achieve the outcome, it could also be viewed as a mediational tool for selection (Joo 2014).

8.5.2 Public service commission regulations

Public Service Regulations offered guidelines for student and employee recruitment in civil professions. The Commission stipulates that three candidates must compete for one vacancy in student teacher selection (Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000, Public Service Commission regulations of 2000). In other words, three applicants had to be invited for one place for teacher training. Thus, as the colleges explored had capacities for 500 trainees per year group, they needed to invite 1 500 candidates. Contrary to this stipulation, the study discovered that all colleges studied invited more than 8 000 candidates for 500 to 600 places (see Table 1 Chapter 1). While one could view this as a fund-raising activity as the applicants paid an interview fee, why such huge numbers were invited to compete for very few vacancies could not be established in this study. Reviewed literature indicates that medical schools in the U.S.A. invited larger numbers in 2020 because there was motivation to help patients and communities in times of crisis like the pandemic (Weinar 2021). From the CHAT perspective, notwithstanding that the selection committee performed according to the division of labour, inviting too many candidates was a secondary contradiction as this was against rules of the Public Service Commission.

8.5.3 Indigenous languages, science and marginalisation

Findings also indicated that some colleges (like College D) added an indigenous language to the minimum requirements for student selection. Again, this addition created a secondary contradiction as it was outside ministry requirements and, therefore, was against the division of labour. This finding was consistent with reviewed literature where Feurer et al. (2016) and the Fiji Education Commission report (1969) indicate that the teaching of vernacular languages needs to be considered in order to have a desired mix of students.

Besides the addition of indigenous language, this study discovered that Colleges B and D added Science to the minimum requirements for student selection in line with the STEM initiative as alluded to in Chapter 6. Such colleges disadvantaged applicants who lacked science passes.

From CHAT, this was a secondary contradiction given that Science was not among the minimum requirements stipulated by ministry and so was a deviation from the expected community rules and division of labour.

The study also discovered that another rule guiding student selection into teachers' colleges was consideration of applicants from marginalised areas. This was evident at College C where applicants from Binga in the extreme north west of Zimbabwe and Malipati in the south east were considered. Such applicants were considered marginalised as they spoke minority languages and the regions were viewed as remote. UNESCO (2018) defines marginalisation as leaving many people behind through national policies and often denying them education. Mukeredzi (2016) defined remote as those areas depicting physical road distance to the nearest urban centre where geographical distance exerts the highest restrictions. These areas were far from towns and cities and generally under-developed. Drawing from the CHAT framework, marginalisation guided student selection as expected by the division of labour (Wheeler 2020).

8.5.4 Student teacher quality and attributes

Furthermore, other rules or guidelines for student selection such as student teacher attributes, motivation, communication skills and dress code emerged as part of the rules at College B. Selection committee members expected candidates to display such attributes during interviews. Motivation was viewed as vital as it is understood as self-drive, the intrinsic ambition vital for any teacher. Reviewed literature reveals that motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning and a driving force to sustain it (Khansir 2017). This was probably why subjects chose to select students who demonstrated motivational attributes in the interviews.

Findings also indicated that good communication skills were sought. Communication skills are vital for effective expression and articulation of ideas or issues and enhance knowledge and information transfer to learners. This is consistent with surveyed literature which indicates that communication skills play a vital role in the transfer of knowledge (Rawat 2015). In other words, teaching and learning success depends not only on teacher knowledge but also on their ability to transfer that knowledge to learners. Furthermore, student selection guidelines included dress code in College B. Dress code is an important aspect not only because a teacher should model for all learners but also to align with the Zimbabwe Public Service Commission code of dress for civil servants (Circular Number 10 of 2006). Clothing communicates responsibility, status, power and ability to be successful (Kashem 2019). Thus, teachers were

expected to be professionally dressed to establish authority and maintain professionalism. Within the CHAT theoretical framework, student teacher attributes like motivation, communication skills and dress code were some of the rules that guided student selection (Wheeler 2020). Other attributes considered were honesty, trustworthiness and time consciousness which were viewed as effective in influencing student achievements and education quality. These attributes contributed to teacher quality. Drawing on reviewed literature, Stronge and Hindman (2003), Rockoff (2004) and Goldhaber and Antony (2003) concur that teacher quality has a lasting effect on student learning and the largest impact on learning achievement. In other words, teacher quality contributes to student outcome. However, the use of student teacher attributes was an anomaly which also created a secondary contradiction as it was not stipulated by the division of labour.

Findings also indicated that some colleges (Colleges B and D) adopted quality assurance as one of the rules for guiding student selection processes. Stage by stage supervision and anonymous marking of written tests were some of the guidelines adopted. Reviewed literature (Adegbesan 2011; Ojo 2007; Asker 1992) shows that supervision guarantees quality and is one of the steps to quality assurance. In this study, heads of department in all colleges ensured quality by checking and confirming entry requirements, verifying English and Mathematics passes and scores. Surveyed literature refers to quality control as operational techniques and activities employed to fulfil requirements for quality (Mukeredzi and Ndamba 2007 in Dodo 2013). In this study quality control implied activities carried out by the selection committee and vice principal from advertising to enrolment of students. Quality assurance was necessary for ensuring that processes would satisfy expected standards. In the CHAT framework all these aspects represented rules for student selection which were stipulated by the division of labour (Joo 2014).

In answer to Research Question Two on the rules that guided student selection minimum requirements, academic qualifications and quality assurance were common rules across the four colleges, while student teacher attributes and teacher quality were additions to the guidelines for selection into three colleges B, C and D. Public Service Regulations were included as guidelines in colleges B and C. Quality assurance was also considered as one of the guidelines for student selection in colleges B and D. While there were guidelines from ministry and Public Service Commission (PSC), colleges added their own including Science at college B and D as well as indigenous languages at college D. Alderman and Mitchel (2015) argue that these requirements do not guarantee effective teachers but are barriers to entry into

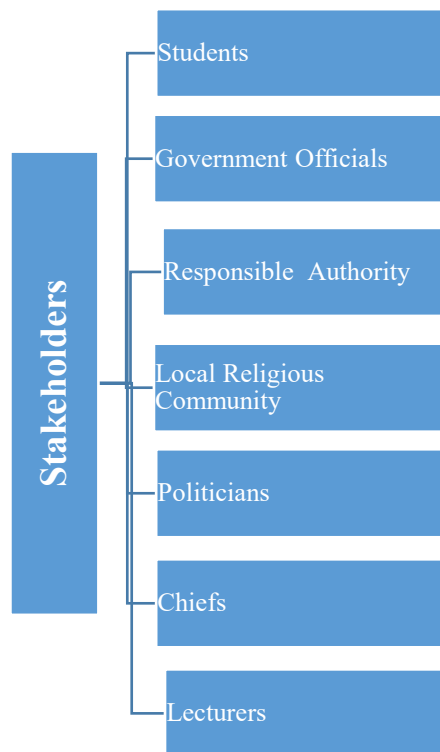
teacher education or are ways to keep potential teachers out of schools. As such admission criteria is the first barrier for most teacher candidates.

The next section discusses findings answering Research Question Three: *How do stakeholders respond to the demand for vacancies for teacher training?*

As alluded to in Chapter Eight the seven stakeholders in this study were comprised of students, government officials, responsible authority, local religious community, politicians, chiefs and lecturers as shown below (Figure 8.5). These stakeholders responded in different ways as discussed below.

8.6 Stakeholders

Figure 8.5: Stakeholders



Source: Researcher 2021

Findings indicated that students as stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies in six ways: applying to different colleges, responding to selection interview invitations, attending selection interviews, raising complaints, using prominent community members and paying fees before receiving acceptance letters. The way students responded is illustrated in Figure 8.6 below.

8.6.1 Students' Responses to stakeholders

Figure 8.6: Students' responses



Source: Researcher 2021

Figure 8.6 shows that students responded to the demand for vacancies in various ways. First, findings indicated that they applied to many colleges to increase their chances of being selected. 28 of the 40 students reported having applied three times to different colleges before attending any selection interview. Consulted literature indicates that the more colleges one applies to, the more chances one has of getting into college (Gordon 2018). On the contrary, Meier (2016) argues that sending out more applications does not increase one's chances of getting hired but well written applications do. Drawing on the funnel theory, sending out application letters occurs at Applicant Stage 3 (Zinn and Johansson 2015). One can, therefore, conclude that prospective students respond to the demand for vacancies by applying to several colleges. Within the CHAT framework, the student teacher community responded to the demand by acting according to the division of labour (Wheeler 2020) and applying to different colleges.

Secondly, following the application, subjects sent out invitations to selection interviews to which the student stakeholders responded. The study revealed that in response to selection interview invitations, the 40 student-teacher-stakeholders responded in three different ways: with joy, with fear and with doubt. 28 student stakeholders responded with joy. Such

stakeholders celebrated because they had never received any response or selection interview invitation in previous years. From CHAT the community members responded with joy to the material mediational tool, subsequent to subjects having performed their roles and responsibilities as expected by the division of labour (Wheeler 2020).

Other student teacher-stakeholders (12) responded to the demand for vacancies, following selection interview invitation messages, with fear and doubt. Students were probably scared and uncertain of success in the selection interview due to previous unsuccessful interviews. Literature surveyed indicates that interview fear emanates from pressure to perform to the best of one's ability (Clarke 2019). Concomitant to this Freeman (2018), Burston (2019), Martin (2013) and Ganesh (2016) contend that interview fear is fear of the unknown, of rejection and of looking like one does not know anything. Interviewees were afraid of things they did not know. However, fear/anxiety is also viewed as a good thing as it prepares one to react to danger (Towey 2016). In this study, students reacted by reading around, researching on the internet and consulting experienced teachers on the teaching career, as alluded to in Chapter 7. Responding to selection interview invitations with fear was a secondary contradiction as it portrayed diversion from what was expected within the division of labour.

Findings also indicated that among the 12 student stakeholders who received selection interview messages with fear, others received them with doubt due to previous experiences. Literature sourced indicates that bad experiences and failures in any area cause doubt in subsequent related performances (Moravek 2019). Thus, experiences of failure, adversity or disappointment cause doubt in subsequent similar situations. However, surveyed literature suggests that self-doubt can provide benefits as it promotes on-going learning and growing (Moravek 2019).

From the discussion above, in response to the demand for vacancies related to receipt of selection interview invitation letters, 28 student stakeholders responded with joy while 12 responded with nervousness, anxiety and doubt. Within the theoretical framework CHAT, joy was expected by the community and division of labour (Joo 2014). Responding to receipt of mediational tools with fear and doubt by 12 student teacher stakeholders was contrary to the division of labour and, hence, a secondary contradiction which would constrain the enactment of the object and, consequently, achievement of the outcome. Mukeredzi (2009) and Waite (2006) concur that contradictions play out when there is diversion from the expected and acceptable norms and practices.

Thirdly, findings revealed that all 40 student stakeholders attended at least one selection interview before getting a vacancy. Some 32 of them responded to the demand for vacancies by attending three or more selection interviews before getting a vacancy. Attending different interviews was either a sign of desperation, as they were now aware of the high rejection rate, or it was an indication of the high demand for vacancies. Reviewed literature indicates that attending interviews without success may suggest that the student did not possess some of the required attributes (Hund 2017). This implies that one needs to perform well in the interview to be selected. However, other literature consulted – Root (2017) and Akani (2011) – reveals that attending many selection interviews develops candidates' confidence and builds their experience and communication skills. From the CHAT framework, selection interviews were mediational tools that enabled subjects to enact the object to achieve the outcome as expected by the division of labour (Trust 2017). Viewing interview attendance from the funnel theory perspective, this was Stage Three: the applicant stage.

Fourthly, some student stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by paying fees before being accepted into college. Reviewed literature related to cheating in Bulgaria, Mellar et al. (2018), discovered that students were assisted by invigilators to cheat in examinations. In this case study, there could have been some staff members who assisted prospective students to act against the division of labour. Furthermore, Mellar et al. (2018) indicate that due to lack of serious consequences after cheating, students continued to cheat. Literature surveyed shows that students cheat because they are surrounded by examples of dishonest acts and believe that dishonest behaviour is rewarded so do not hesitate to engage in it (Loschiavo 2015). Although such incidents portrayed desperation, findings indicated that the prospective student was disqualified, as cheating was not acceptable. In the CHAT framework, paying fees before the offer was a contradiction: a diversion from the normal practice where offer letters were issued before fee payment. From the funnel theory, fee payment was Stage Five: just after receiving acceptance letters but before being enrolled (Zinn and Johansson 2015).

Fifthly, findings revealed that some unsuccessful student stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by complaining. Complaining is consistent with reviewed literature which indicates that interview results lead to feelings of bitterness on the part of the unsuccessful candidates who end up raising complaints (Heathfield 2015). Complaints in this context could prompt reflection on experiences and activities which would lead to identification of efficiencies and deficiencies within the system. Concomitant to this, some unsuccessful candidates responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding explanations as to why they

were unsuccessful despite meeting the requisite qualifications. Within the CHAT framework, demanding answers was within the division of labour and subjects had an obligation within their roles and responsibilities in the activity system to provide such information. Consistent with demanding answers, surveyed literature indicates that such complaints may improve organisational reputation and strengthen public confidence if the public is fully aware of the process (Ombudsman Western Australia 2017). Besides reputation, questioning the selection process was vital as this could lead to improved efficiency, accountability and transparency in the colleges. The selection process is open to public scrutiny as the community cannot entrust that critical process to a few people (Camara and Kimmel 2005). In the CHAT framework, the student stakeholders called the subjects, questioning how they enacted the object which was within the community's division of labour.

Findings also revealed complaints related to student stakeholders who were related to staff as they were viewed as having been at an advantage. The probability of being selected consequent to such connections were high as findings revealed that sometimes selection was done through unorthodox processes. Reviewed literature, as alluded to in Chapter 7, indicates that having connections means having close and positive relationships with others in the social world (Seppala 2013). In the context of this study, this suggested that one belonged to or was related to someone in the college and used that connection as a mediational tool to enact the object and obtain an outcome. From the CHAT perspective, using relationships with prominent people to benefit some prospective student-community members was a primary contradiction as this was not within the division of labour and benefitted undeserving individuals. This was a primary contradiction as it was within the same node/element. Within the funnel theory, complaints were raised at Stage Three-applicant stage while waiting for Stage Four-admitted students (Zinn and Johansson 2015).

Other complaints that emerged emanated from interview tests that were written on the bus. With such unethical practices, the quality of the whole selection became highly questionable. Within the CHAT framework, subjects acted in contradiction or deviation from the norm, thus, violated the division of labour creating a secondary contradiction.

From the discussion above, there were mixed responses to the demand for vacancies by student stakeholders. Some students responded as expected by the community, for instance, by applying to different colleges, receiving selection invitation messages with joy, attending selection interviews and raising complaints. At the same time, other students responded to the

demand for vacancies by receiving selection invitation messages with fear and doubt, paying fees before receiving acceptance letters, using prominent people and writing interview tests in inappropriate venues. All these responses were a deviation from the normal practice.

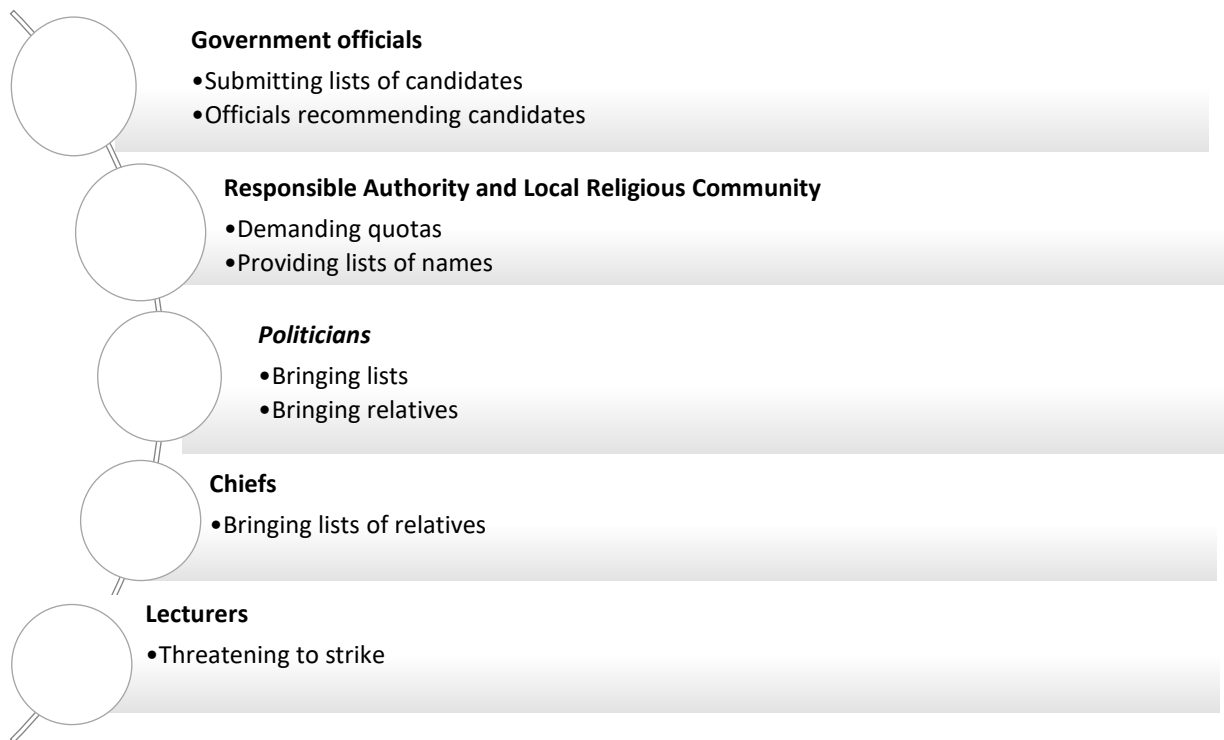
8.7 Responses by other stakeholders

Findings revealed that stakeholders responded in diverse ways. Government officials responded to the demand for vacancies by making requests for places and recommending candidates for selection. The responsible authority and religious community responded by demanding quotas and providing lists of candidates. The political figures, responded by demanding vacancies for their relatives and sending lists to colleges and college lecturers responded by bringing relatives and threatening to strike. Viewing this from the CHAT framework, this was due to the multi-voicedness of the activity system where community members due to different personalities and attitudes express different interests and views (Jones 2014). Thus, they responded to the demand for vacancies differently as illustrated in Figure 20 and discussed below.

8.7.1 Government officials

Government official stakeholders, responded to the demand for vacancies in two ways: by submitting lists of names and by recommending applicants to the colleges. College officials who were subordinates of government officials according to reporting structures within the MHTE had no option but to comply. Situations where line managers asked subordinates for places promoted corruption and possibly lowered standards and consequently teacher quality. Within the CHAT framework, this again portrayed a secondary contradiction as this was against rules and the division of labour. Reviewed literature indicates that such contradictions promote enrolling undeserving students at the expense of strong students (Tshili 2014).

Figure 8.7: Responses by other stakeholders



Source: Researcher 2021

Further, surveyed literature confirms corruption of a similar nature where the most common forms of corruption rampant in Zimbabwe include demanding bribes to facilitate admission to schools or colleges (Transparency International 2013). In the CHAT framework, government officials used mediational tools to compel subjects to enact the object outside rules and division of labour (Wheeler 2020).

Secondly, government officials responded to the demand for vacancies by recommending applicants for teacher training programmes. Such recommendations added weight to the application letters giving an advantage over others. Surveyed literature, as alluded to in Chapter 7, shows that some U.S.A teacher training programmes required written recommendations (Darmody and Smyth 2016). Further, responses of government official stakeholders relate to reviewed literature where government officials in Ghana influenced student selection in similar ways. Colleges often come under pressure from prominent people in the local educational communities to admit candidates other than the best qualified for teacher education entry (Akyeampong 2003). The selection processes which were intended to be meritocratic apparently turned otherwise in this study. From the CHAT perspective, the way government stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies created two contradictions: a primary contradiction that occurred within the same node and a secondary contradiction that occurred

across different nodes of the activity system (Engestrom 2001). The primary contradiction occurred as the government officials disadvantaged other community members acting on behalf of their relatives. In the secondary contradiction, all CHAT nodes were affected as government officials acted against division of labour, rule, tool, subject and object in the activity system. Drawing on the funnel theory, recommending prospective students was at the Applicant Stage Three when student had decided to apply to an institution (Copeland 2009).

8.7.2 Responsible authorities and the local religious community

With regard to responsible authorities, these stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding a quota within the five or six hundred vacancies available to be allocated to their list of candidates. This emanated from the fact that all missionary institutions were initially established for evangelisation. As such there tended to be feelings of entitlement, hence, the demand for quotas. Mission colleges were under pressure not only from responsible authorities but also from general religious, who supplied the subjects with lists of candidates for consideration for selection. Notwithstanding that lists of candidates and demanding a percentage of vacancies may have been justified given their responsibilities within their churches, this created secondary contradictions. In the CHAT framework, each node of the activity system should perform efficiently according to their division of labour to ensure effective performance of the entire system. Demanding or providing quotas was against rules and division of labour. Eisenman (2018) indicates that although the quota system is practised, the dilemma is always that better qualified candidates are not within the quota category or the people selected. Those candidates within the quota category are often markedly less qualified than some of the other applicants. Again, the quota system could result in discrimination against non-religious students as the best candidates may be outside the responsible authority's religion. However, literature also indicates that demanding a quota is justified as disadvantaged groups would gain from affirmative action. At the same time giving preference to less qualified persons through the quota system would constitute a contradiction and make things worse because it gives admission and privileges to those who otherwise would not qualify (Eisenman 2018). Such practice could be viewed as rewarding less qualified persons. This results in a secondary contradiction because it involves more than one node.

The local religious community as stakeholders were people from surrounding villages. Like the responsible authority, they responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding a quota

as colleges were situated in their rural communities. This scenario was common in the two missionary colleges situated in rural areas. This sense of entitlement could also be viewed as portraying some xenophobic perceptions due to high student admissions from outside the locality. Surveyed literature indicates that such practices are discriminatory and in violation of the fundamental rights of citizens (Mashinga 2019). In this study, offering a quota would deny qualified students from outside the district opportunities to train, which would deprive local students of multicultural socialisation exposure and experience (Kataka 2014). From the CHAT perspective, this was another secondary contradiction which breached the rules of the community and was outside the division of labour.

8.7.3 Politicians

Politicians responded to the demand for vacancies by either bringing candidates or by sending lists of candidates to be selected. In three colleges, politicians viewed themselves as entitled to vacancies because the colleges were located in their constituencies but in College D no political influence was reported. Politicians apparently overlooked the mediational tools, as well as guidelines and rules, invoking their political ‘muscle’ to submit lists of candidates to subjects. There was a lack of common object: politicians did not share the same objective with subjects, because they did not observe rules and failed to use accepted mediational tools. Failure to observe rules culminated in failure to act according to division of labour which created tension and that resulted in secondary contradictions.

In the CHAT framework, giving preference to higher performers in both interviews and academic performance was according to rules and the division of labour while submitting names of relatives and bringing candidates to be selected was gross abuse of power which interfered with the selection process. Literature indicates that such practices portrayed nepotism or selection by patronage (Omeje et al. 2016). As alluded to earlier, literature surveyed shows that such practices led to high rates of poor academic performance and dropping-out in Universities in Nigeria (Omeje; Egwa and Adikwa 2016). This was due to low quality students enrolled who could not meet academic expectations. From the CHAT perspective, the imposition of candidates on subjects which occurred in this study created both primary and secondary contradictions (Yamagata-Lynch 2010).

8.7.4 Chiefs

Local chiefs responded to the demand for vacancies by bringing lists of their relatives for selection. Again, this problem was prevalent at the two missionary institutions which were located in rural areas under the administration of chiefs. Bringing lists of relatives and demanding vacancies portrayed abuse of power and breach of college rules and community division of labour in the activity system. This behaviour seemingly compromised standards and begged questions regarding process efficiency, as well as the nature of students recruited and trained as discussed above. Literature surveyed condemns unethical practices where people admit applicants with powerful advocates rather than students who show the promise of making the best use of the institution's resources (Camara and Kimmel 2005). Findings indicated that some colleges were recruiting students who were advocated for by various stakeholders and not on merit. In the CHAT framework, these were secondary contradictions against community rules and the behaviour was outside division of labour. From the CHAT perspective bringing lists of relatives constrained subjects in enacting the object and worked against achievement of the outcome.

8.7.5 Lecturers

Lecturer stakeholders who were not selection committee members, responded to the demand for vacancies by threatening to strike if their relatives were not selected. Selecting staff relatives was outside rules and guidelines of selecting deserving students which was likely to threaten teacher quality and subsequently learner achievement. Surveyed literature indicates that in England teacher education providers came under pressure to take candidates that they had rejected because of poor grades (Richardson 2019). In this study, threats to strike and imposing relatives constituted a primary contradiction within one node of the activity system (Mukeredzi 2009). From the CHAT framework, the community – particularly academic staff – was expected to behave and support institutional rules and guidelines of which they were a part and honour norms, responsibilities and practices of their activity systems as allocated through their division of labour (Wilson 2014). Threats which were reported in one missionary college were consistent with reviewed literature where in Zimbabwe, principals in all colleges nationally end up enrolling more applicants due to pressure exerted upon them from different stakeholders within and outside their colleges (Machingura 2006). One can conclude that due to pressure

colleges are forced into flouting their own selection rules and regulations which affects the quality of student teacher selected, teacher produced, learner achievement and, consequently, the education system. Literature indicates that measures in student teacher selection, preparation and certification are the strongest correlates of education quality and student achievement. Enrolling and training poorly qualified candidates leads to the teaching profession being looked down upon (Darling-Hammond 2000). Contrary to the above, Harris and Sass (2011) argue that student teacher selection and teacher training or college entrance examination scores have no impact on teaching quality and productivity. However, the four selected colleges regarded candidate academic performance and attributes as crucial to teacher quality.

In conclusion, from the discussion above, students responded to the demand for vacancies by applying to different colleges, receiving selection interview invitation messages with joy, fear and doubt, attending selection interviews, paying fees before receiving acceptance letters, writing interview tests inappropriately and by raising complaints.

Other stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies by demanding vacancies and bringing lists of their relatives to be selected, flouting community rules and division of labour in the activity system. Responsible authority and local religious community demanded quotas due to a sense of entitlement and, as well, politicians and chiefs made demands portraying a sense of entitlement.

8.8 Original contributions of the study

This study on the dynamics of entry into teacher education makes three contributions related to theoretical framework, student selection policy issues and corrupt activities in student selection processes.

Firstly, the CHAT framework has been used to explore, understand and explain various aspects in other disciplines, for example, ICT, assessment and teacher professional development and student learning, HIV/AIDS library programmes and others. This study discovered that the framework is effective in unpacking, understanding and explaining the dynamics of entry into teacher education which is a major contribution of this study. However, the study also discovered that the framework was insufficient for purposes of tracing stages of student teacher entry into teacher education from vacancy advertisements to enrolment. It would, therefore,

need a complementary theory to help trace the entire journey of the prospective student from enquiry to enrolment in college. Drawing from surveyed literature Chikezie (2016) points out that it is absolutely fine to combine two theories in one's work but at the end one needs to discuss which theory agreed with one's findings more. In this study, findings were better understood and explained through CHAT. Dhar (2018) supports Chikezie (2016) arguing that multiple theories can be used in research to support and develop the model according to epistemological perspectives. In this study the two theories complemented each other.

Secondly, at the commencement of this study I expected to examine and understand policy guidelines for student teacher selection into teacher training colleges which would provide a standardising mediational tool for the process across all colleges. However, this study discovered that there was no MHTE policy, guidelines or stipulations apart from the O level requirements, to guide student teacher selection into teacher training colleges. The study discovered that the absence of ministry policy gave rise to variations in the requirements and stipulations for entry into teacher education by the different colleges. Reviewed literature indicates that variations are a result of vastly different contexts in which different institutions operate (Lynagh et al. 2018). Surveyed literature further indicates that the variations are neither good nor bad but depend on the situation. In other words, as the variations are 'situated', they would be appropriate for particular colleges. Schlotter (2002) and Appleby (2011) argue that such variations are bad when the goal is to obtain consistent outputs of a process but can be good where the goal is to obtain different, varying ideas. In the context of this study such variations were inappropriate as the aim of Teacher Education was to develop appropriate attributes a new teacher would carry into the Zimbabwean classroom:

A moral (unhu/ubuntu), upright, tolerant and cooperative team player

A self-motivated learning facilitator, innovator and assessor

A trustworthy, resourceful and creative life-long learner

An effective communicator and classroom practitioner

A highly responsible, accountable and articulate performer

Someone able to promote peace and solve conflicts

A partner and patriot, respectful of others and property

A self-manager, entrepreneur, sympathiser and empathiser

Someone with personal integrity, good judgment and honesty (Mukeredzi 2009:27 citing Murerwa 2004, the then Minister of Higher Education)

Thirdly, another contribution related to corruption. Transparency International (2005) discovered corrupt practices including paying bribes, pay-offs to various staff and academic fraud were prevalent in student selection into college. This study discovered corrupt practices were rife in the selection process across all colleges. Such corrupt activities included bribing lecturers or lecturers requesting bribes in exchange for vacancies, release of interview selection tests to some candidates which were written in inappropriate venues, stakeholders (government officials, responsible authority, religious community, politicians, lecturers and chiefs) submitting lists of their relatives to colleges for selection and responsible authority and religious community claiming some entitlement and demanding quotas. All these corrupt practices created contradictions from the CHAT perspective as they disregarded acceptable selection criteria, rules and guidelines.

8.8.1 Implications based on the study

Based on the findings, the study draws five implications related to the CHAT framework, selection policy, corruption, interview invitations and interview selection mediation tools.

The study revealed that the CHAT framework could be used to study student selection. However, it emerged that on its own the framework would be inadequate to trace the applicant's journey from the advertisement to registration as a trainee. Therefore, to obtain complete understanding of the phenomenon of student entry into teacher education, the theory would need a complementary framework.

Secondly, the study discovered that there was no ministry student selection policy to guide and standardise the process across all the colleges. Given the disparities, mismatches of approaches and requirements added to the ministry stipulated academic entry qualifications, student teachers entered teacher education through unlevelled playing fields. This study recommends the development of a common MHTE policy on student selection to guide colleges and provide standardisation.

Thirdly, the study discovered unethical, unprofessional and corrupt practices in student teacher selection processes in the different colleges. Such corrupt practices included 'vacancy-buying':

bribing lecturers, lecturers requesting bribes to offer vacancies or deceitfully paying college fees before receiving offer letters. These corrupt practices created a bad image of the training institutions, which potentially lowered standards of teachers' trained possibly impacting on the education system and, above all, disadvantaging other prospective students. The study recommends that the parent ministry adopts a zero-tolerance policy to corruption through crafting stiff penalties for those caught in malpractice to deter corruption in student selection into teacher education institutions.

Fourthly, in this study, findings revealed that too many candidates were invited for selection interviews. 8 000 applicants were invited yet across colleges there were only approximately 500 to 600 vacancies available. This was seemingly a fundraising activity by the colleges. This study recommends strict adherence of colleges to the Public Service Commission requirements of three candidates for one vacancy in inviting candidates for interviews. The study suggests formulation of regulations related to interview invitation of candidates to control the numbers and reduce related expenses given the way the Zimbabwean economy plummeted (Mukeredzi 2016; Mlambo 2017) during the time of this study.

Fifthly, the results showed that three out of the four colleges explored employed only one selection mediational tool: the interview. This finding contradicted reviewed literature where Blunt (2009) and Sahlberg (2010) argue for a combination of mediational tools for a robust result. Further, reviewed literature indicates that selection of prospective teachers benefits from multiple predictors as teacher effectiveness is multi-dimensional and may not be easily predicted using a single predictor (Klassen et al. 2017). This study recommends additive models where interview selection tools are used in combination to make interview selection findings more robust. Literature consulted (Lynagh et al. 2018) emphasises the use of several tools to cater for different contexts and various stakeholders' needs.

8.8.2 Implications for research

Implications for research were based on two views. To begin with, this study explored only four selected training colleges extracted from a population of seventeen colleges in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the sample used was extracted from first and third year, student teachers in each of the four research sites, including eight lecturers and three vice principals. While this sample size was adequate for this qualitative study, it was far too small a sample to represent thousands of other student teachers in teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The study recommends a

more comprehensive study which involves all or more colleges than used in this study, using quantitative or mixed methods approaches which would give a more nuanced picture of the dynamics of student teacher entry into Teacher Education.

8.9 Summary

In all the colleges explored, interviews and computers for storing data emerged as the central mediation tools for student selection. There was no ministry policy for guiding student teacher selection into teacher education. This forced colleges to develop their own diverse rules. Across all the four colleges studied academic performance among diverse college developed guidelines, emerged as the central requirement. Various ways/forms characterised the manner in which stakeholders responded to the demand for vacancies across all colleges and contradictions emerged from most of those responses.

As I close my research journey into the dynamics of student teacher entry into Teacher Education in selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, I conclude that pre-service teacher selection into teacher training programmes involves many complex processes as captured by one Vice Principal:

'The selection committee working under the jurisdiction of the Vice Principal, develops the advertisement which is approved by the MHTE before going to the press. Thereafter sort the applications by grades, and enter the data in the database. Next, they invite candidates for the interviews working out all the logistics of the interview day. Following interviews, they collate the marks ranking the final marks and make the final selection of students. (Vice Principal at College D).

Student teacher selection viewed through the lens of activity theory is a dynamic, interactive process mediated by the tools and rules of the institution in which it occurs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of information for participants (student teachers, vice principals and lecturers)



Letter of Information for participants (student teachers, vice principals and lecturers)

Title of the Research study: Dynamics of entry into teacher education: Pre-service teacher selection and admission process in teaching colleges in Zimbabwe.

Principal Investigators/ researcher –Bernard Berejena M.Ed (Curriculum and Arts)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisors: Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi PhD and Dr Abraham PhD

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how student selection and admission processes are conducted in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The study seeks to understand these processes from the students, lecturers and vice principals' perspectives. The study hopes to contribute to the recruitment policy of the teacher education program in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary education, Science and Technology development.

You have been chosen to participate in the study because of your participation in the selection process in your college.

Outline of the procedure

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be interviewed individually and also grouped for a focus group discussion. During the interviews, the researcher will observe selection interview sessions at my college. Interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted in a quiet venue at your college and will take at least thirty minutes. Interviews schedules will be used for this purpose. Only student teachers (forty) who have attended three or more selection interviews will be selected for the interviews. Lecturers (sixteen) who have three years experience of conducting student teacher selection interviews will qualify to be interviewed by the researcher. All vice principals (four) will be interviewed because they chair student selection committees in their respective colleges. A total of sixty participants will form the sample. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time, if you withdraw there will not be any negative consequences. I will tape record the discussions with your permission to check for accuracy after the interview` and will also write down notes. The study will be conducted between April 2018 and June 2018.

Risks and Discomforts to the Participant

Interviews will be audio recorded only with your permission; therefore there are no risks or discomforts in the process.

Benefits to the participants and the researcher

The study will present an opportunity for you to air your views on how student selection and admission processes into teacher training are and should be done.

The department of teacher education and the teacher education programmes may use information from the study to influence policy on student teacher selection and admission into Teacher Education in Zimbabwe and this may benefit the higher education system as a whole.

To the majority of the stakeholders, the information from my study will reach them through published articles.

Reasons why participants may be withdrawn from the study

There will be no adverse consequences for any participants to be withdrawn but should they choose to withdraw they will be free to do so. Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any prejudice.

Remuneration

All participants will be served with refreshments after the interviews. However, there will be no monetary remunerations for participating in the study.

Costs of the study

No participants will be expected to cover any costs towards the study as all data generation will be carried out at the participating colleges. All the costs will be the responsibility of the researcher.

Confidentiality

All information provided will be treated as very confidential.

No names or addresses will be used in this study. This is done so that no one will recognize you from the information that you will give. The use of pseudo names will be done and all information will be locked up and will be shredded after five years.

Research-related injury

This study will be an injury-free process to you. In case of a research related injury, compensation will be the responsibility of the researcher.

Persons to contact in the event of any problems or queries.

Supervisors: Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi, PhD 076 2995 974/ 082 605 6401 email: TabithaM@dut.ac.za

Dr. Abraham, PHD

Researcher Tel: 0775 365 372 email: lbberejena@gmail.com or the Institutional Research Ethic Administrator on 0313732375. Complaints can be reported to the Director Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S Moyo on 0313732577 or moyos@dut.ac.za

Appendix B: Consent form for participants



1. CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS (STUDENT TEACHERS, LECTURERS AND VICE PRINCIPALS)

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher , about the nature , conduct , benefits and risks of this study-Research Ethics Clearance Number:
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may , at any stage , without prejudice , withdraw my consent and participation in the study
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.
- I have agreed to have the interview tape recorded.
- I have agreed to use pseudonym.

.....
 Full Name of Participate Date Time Signature/Right
 Thumbprint

I..... herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

.....
 Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

.....
 Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Appendix C: Request for permission to carry out research: MHTESTD



The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
Head Office

01 July 2017

Dear Sir

7. RE: Permission to carry out a research study at Bondolfi Teachers' College, Masvingo Teachers' College, Mkoba Teachers' College and Morgenster Teachers' College.

I am a student pursuing a PHD study through Durban University of Technology. I write to seek permission to carry out a research in the above mentioned colleges. The title of my study is: The dynamics of entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe: Pre-service teacher recruitment and selection processes in teachers' colleges. The purpose of this study is to explore student teacher recruitment, selection and admission processes in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to understand these processes from the perspectives of students, lecturers and other stakeholders.

I intend to interview 60 people, that is, 4 V.Ps, 16 lecturers and 40 students. I will also do focus group discussions with 40 students, 10 students from each college, that is, two groups of five from each college. I look forward to collecting data between November 2017 and February 2018. The findings of the study will be available to your head office.

For more information, you may contact my supervisors whose contact details are below:

Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi
Adult and Community Education
Unit of Adult and Community Education
Faculty of Arts and Design
Indumiso, Midlands Campus, Durban University of Technology
Pietermaritzburg

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

Bernard Berejena

Appendix D: Request for permission to conduct research: Catholic Diocese Masvingo



The Education Secretary
Catholic Diocese of Masvingo
Robertson Street
Masvingo

Dear Father

8. RE: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

I am a student pursuing a PHD study through Durban University of Technology. I am writing to seek permission to carry out research at Bondolfi Teachers College. The title of my study is, "The dynamics of entry into Teacher Education in Zimbabwe: Pre-Service Teacher Recruitment and Selection Process in Teachers' Training Colleges. The purpose of this research is to explore student recruitment and selection processes in teachers colleges in Zimbabwe.

I intend to interview the Vice Principal, four lecturers and 10 students. The findings will be availed to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, the college and the Masvingo Catholic Diocese Education Secretary's Office.

For more information, you may contact my supervisor whose contact details are below:
Professor Tabitha Grace Mukeredzi, PHD
Adult, Community and Post Graduate Education Unit
DUT Indumiso/ Midlands Campus
15 JF Sithole Road
Imbali 3201
Pietermaritzburg

Yours faithfully

Bernard Berejena

Appendix E: Request for permission to carry out a research study in Masvingo Teachers College



The Principal

Masvingo Teachers' College
P.O Box 7750
Masvingo

01 July 2017

Dear Sir

9a. RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY IN MASVINGO TEACHERSCOLLEGE.

I am a student pursuing a PHD through Durban University of Technology. I am writing to seek permission to carry out a research study at Masvingo Teachers' College. The title of my study is, "The dynamics of entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe: Pre-service teacher recruitment and selection processes in teacher training colleges. I intend to interview people who are involved in interviewing and selecting students into colleges who are the Vice Principal and four lecturers and ten students. I will also conduct focus group discussions with two groups of five students. I hope to collect data between November 2017 and February 2018. The findings of the study will be made available to your Head Office and also your college.

For more information, contact my supervisor whose contact details are below:

Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi and Dr Abraham
Adult and Community Education
Unit of Adult and Community Education
Faculty of Arts and Design
Indumiso, Midlands Campus, Durban University of Technology
Pietermaritzburg

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

Bernard Berejena

Appendix F: Request for permission to carry out a research study in Mkoba Teachers' College



The Principal

MKOBA Teachers' College
P.O Box 350
Gweru

2 July 2017

Dear Madam

9b.RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY IN MKOBA TEACHERS' COLLEGE.

I am a student pursuing a PHD through Durban University of Technology. I am writing to seek permission to carry out a research study at Mkoba Teachers' College. The title of my study is: "The dynamics of entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe: Pre-service teacher recruitment and selection processes in teacher training colleges. I intend to interview people who are involved in interviewing and selecting students into the college who are the V.P and four lecturers and ten students. I will also do focus group discussions with two groups of five students I hope to collect data between November 2017 and February 2018. The findings of the study will be made available to your Head Office as well as your Office.

For more information, contact my supervisor whose contact details are below:

Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi and Dr Abraham
Adult and Community Education
Unit of Adult and Community Education
Faculty of Arts and Design
Indumiso, Midlands Campus, Durban University of Technology
Pietermaritzburg

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

Bernard Berejena

Appendix G: Request for permission to carry out a research study in Morgenster Teachers' College



The Principal

Morgenster Teachers' College
P.O Box 570
Masvingo

2 July 2017

Dear Madam

9c. RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY IN MORGENSTER TEACHERS' COLLEGE.

I am a student pursuing a PHD through Durban University of Technology. I am writing to seek permission to carry out a research study at Morgenster Teachers' College. The title of my study is, "The dynamics of entry into teacher education in Zimbabwe: Pre-service teacher recruitment and selection processes in teacher training colleges. I intend to interview people who are involved in interviewing and selecting students into the college who are the V.P and 4 lecturers and ten students. I will also do focus group discussions with two groups of five students I hope to collect data between November 2017 and February 2018. The findings of the study will be made available to your Head Office as well as your Office.

For more information, contact my supervisor whose contact details are below:
Professor Tabitha Mukeredzi and Dr Abraham
Adult and Community Education
Unit of Adult and Community Education
Faculty of Arts and Design
Indumiso, Midlands Campus, Durban University of Technology
Pietermaritzburg

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

Bernard Berejena

Appendix H: Interview schedule for focus group discussion for students



Research Instruments

10. Focus Group Discussion for Students – Interview schedule

1. How did you know about the vacancies in this college?
2. How did you feel when you were invited for the selection interview?
3. Please, you tell me about your interview experiences
4. How many selection interviews did you attend before being admitted?
5. What documents were you asked to bring to the interview?
6. How were those documents used?
7. How do you rate the reception that you got when you arrived at the college? When you entered the interview room?
8. How would you describe the selection process?
9. What do you think should be done to enhance the selection process

Appendix I: Interview schedule student teachers individual face to face interview

1. Tell me how you heard about teaching vacancies. What did you do about it?
2. Tell me what happened there after.
3. How many times did you apply to the college before you were invited for a selection interview? How did you feel about being invited for the interview? Tell me about the process.
4. Tell about the preparations that you made for the interview? When you got into the interview, did you feel you had prepared enough?
5. Please, tell me the process of being interviewed that you went through. How long did it take until you were offered a vacancy?
6. How did you feel before you received the offer letter?
7. How many interviews did you attend before you got a place? Where they at one colleges or at different colleges? Tell me about those interviews
8. Tell me about the kind of information that the questions you were asked required.
- 9.
10. Did you expect to be asked those questions? How did you feel about the answers that you gave?
11. What documents were you asked to bring?
12. How do you describe the selection process? Why would you describe it like that?
13. Did you attend interviews at other colleges before you came for the interview at this college?
14. Are there similarities in the way these interviews are held in different colleges? Please tell me more
15. What do you think should be done to enhance the selection process?
16. Who would you say was most helpful to you in the selection process?
17. Did you at any time try to find assistance to get invited for an interview at the college?
18. What are your concerns to the student selection process?
19. How can these concerns be best addressed?

Appendix J: Interview schedule lecturers face to face interviews

1. What is done when applications have been received in the college?
2. What criterion do you use in selecting those to invite and not to invite for selection interviews?
3. What selection criterion do you follow in student selection?
4. Please take me through the selection process. What rules do you follow in selecting and admitting students?
5. What materials do you use in student teacher selection?
6. What records do you use in the selection?
7. Are there any challenges that you face in the selection of students?
8. Do you think issues to do with character should be included in the interview questions? Why?
9. Does the selection criterion assess both the academic and non- academic capabilities of candidates?
10. In what ways does the Ministry influence the selection process? Please tell me in what ways.
11. Are there any other stakeholders who influence the selection process? Please tell me in what ways. What do you think should be done to enhance the selection process?

Appendix K: Interview schedule interviews with vice principals

1. Approximately how many applications do you receive per session? What has been the trend in the last five years?
2. How many places do you usually have?
3. What happens when applications are received in college?
4. Briefly explain how the section committee works.
5. Who has the final word on the final list of candidates?
6. What happens on the interview day?
7. Explain the selection stages that the committee undertakes to complete the process.
8. What selection criteria do you use to select the candidates?
9. Are there any challenges that are faced in the selection of students?
10. What do you think should be done to address these challenges?
11. Are there any guidelines that are followed in the selection process?
12. Who develops those guidelines? Have you found them effective?
13. In what ways do you ensure fairness in the selection process?
14. In what ways do you ensure transparency?
15. Do you get any complaints from the (a) public, (b) staff or (c) students after the selection process?
16. What is the nature of the complaints?
17. Are there any ways in which government officials influence the selection process? Please tell me more?

Appendix L: Observation schedule

1) I will observe the following; I will focus on a) tools – what tools are used to select student teachers into teacher training colleges? Listing the tools.

b) How are these tools used to select student teachers?

2) What rules guide student teacher selection into higher education? Listing the rules. How are these rules applied in the selection of student teachers? Did you observe any deviation from the rules? If yes, which stakeholders are involved?

Appendix M: Questionnaire for student teachers

1. Gender: male female
2. Age 18-25 years 26-30years 31-35 years Over 35 years
3. Highest Academic Qualification: O level A level
4. Years of study: First year Second year Third Year
5. How many times have you attended selection interviews before enrolling into college?
6. Did you attend selection interviews in different colleges? Yes/ No
7. In how colleges?