THE CHALLENGES OF GENDER EQUITY IN STUDENT GOVERNANCE ORGANISATIONS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HARARE PROVINCE.

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to uncover the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutions. The research questions were more centered on four key areas, extent of gender equity in student governance bodies, factors surrounding tertiary institutions in promoting gender equity or inequity, importance of gender equity in student governance bodies and ways of alleviating the problem of gender inequity. The study employed qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm. The targeted populations were all the tertiary institutes in Zimbabwe and eight tertiary institutions were included in the study. The sample of the study was derived from Deans of students, students in student governing bodies (S.G.B), and general students. Deans of students were interviewed. Data analysis consisted of examining, categorising, tabulating or recombining evidence to address the initial proposing of a study. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously as an ongoing process. Data were analyzed using the liberal feminism analysis and grounded theory. The key findings of the research were that, there were few females participating in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutions. Factors surrounding female participation include supportive environment, experience in leadership, leadership training factors hindering gender equity include verbal harassment, social stigma, religion, culture. The study also revealed that gender equity was very important and was to be observed critically in all the institutions. Tertiary institutions need to aim for 50-50 gender split in S.G.B finally to achieve gender equity there is need for all organization and each college to have gender policies. The study also recommended that the Non Governmental Organisation (N.G.O) should offer leadership training to female students for them to enhance their confidence and knowledge. The administration to have gender polices those which did not have and those who have to amend their constitution so as to promote females in decision making processes.
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Special mention goes to my husband Lawrence Kuziwa Kutiwa for the encouragement and support. I could not have made it without him. The entire family too deserves a special ‘Thank You’ for the long periods I was away from them, and the chores I left to them. To my friends, thank you so much for your words of encouragement. I shall forever be grateful.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all my four sons, Tinotenda, Kundai, Panashe and Nokutenda, in a desire that among them, my grandchildren and great grandchildren are some, if not all who will aspire to attain similar qualifications.
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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<tr>
<td>C.E.D.A.</td>
<td>Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
</tr>
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<td>I.L.O.</td>
<td>International Labor Organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.D.G.S.</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>H.E.I.S.</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.G.O.</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.H. D.</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.N.E.S.C.O.</td>
<td>United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.I.D.</td>
<td>Women in Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.C.P.R.</td>
<td>Convention on Civil and Political Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. D. .P.A.</td>
<td>Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.O.W.</td>
<td>National Organisation for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.C.P.A.</td>
<td>American College Personnel Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.A.S.P.A.</td>
<td>National Association of Student Personnel Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.E.R.S.</td>
<td>Higher Education Resource Services</td>
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<td>S.G.B.</td>
<td>Student Governing Bodies</td>
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<td>T.W.T.</td>
<td>The Women Trust</td>
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<td>Y.A.</td>
<td>Youth Alive</td>
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W.I.M… Volunteers In Mission

P.N… Peer Network

S.R.C… Student Representative Council

S.R.C… Student Representative Assembly

ZimC.H.E… Zimbabwe National Council of Higher Education

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

When the researcher was studying at Africa University from 2004 to 2007 for the first degree, and 2010-2012 for Masters Degree, she observed that the student governing bodies, like students representative council (S.R.C.) presidency were mainly occupied by men. The same pattern was observed occurring in student governing bodies when the researcher was lecturing at Nyadire teachers college from 2012 to the present date. This gave the researcher an interest to explore the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisation of tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. According to Whitehead (2004), “The issue of gender equity has raised a lot of debate the world over”. The main cry being that, if the women’s talents in global scientific and technological work forces are to be made use of, actions that require gender equity are to be addressed now. The absence of women at seminar level is a worry especially at tertiary institutions where students are empowered with skills and knowledge. Participation trends in higher education reveal a reversal in gender gap. According to Stronquist (2007, p. 34) ironically there are more female students than male students the world over at higher education level. This is also the situation in Zimbabwe (Chinyani, 2007). Such statistics could be misleading if taken at face value. It is difficult to imagine the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) without higher education. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are recognised as a key force for modernisation and development, especially in developing countries (Teferra and Altbach 2004, p. 21). HEIs are the major means of empowerment through which both men and women could realise their potential (Grunberg 2001, p. 7). As Assie-Lumumba (2007, p. 8) articulated:
Higher education is one of the most important sectors of human resource formation, especially in a developing world. It is an area where philosophers, technicians, scientists, and humanists are formed and produced. In principle, with their specialized and general knowledge, skills, research and innovative capacities, these actors can be considered as the primary agents or engines of social, political, and economic progress in any given society, especially in the context of a globalised economy.

The challenge today is not to simply ensure that women and girls receive quality education in numbers equal to men and boys, but also to encourage females to pursue traditionally male dominated fields. Educators themselves should act as change agents within schools and society; they should acquire new skills, knowledge and especially attitudes to address the injustices of the past (UN, 2009).

There is a prevalence of stereotypes of women as unfit to hold leadership posts. Shaba (2003, p. 5), explains further that stereotypes are the rigidly held beliefs that men and women, because of their biological make up, possess distinct psychological traits and characteristics. Such stereotypes have serious negative economic and social consequences. Chabaya, Rembe, and Wadesango, 2009.), are of the view that there are also gender myths which are socially constructed ideas or beliefs about men and women that are generally accepted as truth. These beliefs are created in our minds and are reinforced by ceremonies, traditional practices, customs and religion. Holmes et al. (2003), state that, gender stereotypes are categorical beliefs regarding the traits and behavioural characteristics ascribed to individuals on the basis of gender. Typically, it would appear women are stereotyped as more generous or kind and men as more ambitious.

According to Sall (2009), gender stereotypes inhibit women from realising their full potential. Women who aspire to be leaders are not accepted by the society because of cultural values. They are victimised as well as negatively labelled (Karumbidza, 2008; Kahle, 2004).
this means is that women are disadvantaged. When they become leaders their knowledge or expertise is questioned. However, research by Sawyer (2002), suggests that women were very effective in administration. Most of the researches on women administrators have been carried out in developed countries like Britain, America and Germany and it was found out, according to Tamalo (2002), that women leaders are very effective.

Chinyani (2007) observes that schools and families have been very strong agents of socialisation which tends to inhibit the advancement of women. Society seems to consider women as less capable than men. Serious decision-making is considered by most men as their preserve. Women who try to aspire are not welcomed but are seen as rebellious (Mudiwa, 2010).

On the contrary, research by Mama (2001, p. 19) asserts that engaging in activities of increasing women’s participation in higher education is really a transformatory undertaking since it involves trying to change people’s beliefs, and attitudes towards women. Research by Whitehead (2004), on women leadership concluded that women were more assertive and persuasive. They have a stronger will to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. Women leaders were also found to be more empathetic and flexible as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts. They read situations accurately and take information from all sides. The majority of research on gender accessed by the researcher has been conducted in work places thus this research filled in the gap in tertiary institutions.
Women and development in Africa.

Most women in Africa still live and work in conditions under which they are treated as mere instruments of production and social reproduction. (Chabaya, Rembe, and Wadesango, 2009) Their status and rights are in many respects even more marginalized than women elsewhere in the world who, even if they are subordinated to patriarchy, suffer it largely within the confines of household’ (Hyden, 2006:182). This may not be the entire predicament facing women. Since we cannot know without finding out, I believe a study of this nature may explore other issues about women representation, offer some clues and shed more light on the subject matter. The challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions are to be explored.

Within its mandate for advocacy and coordination of UN System and international support for peace, security, human rights and inclusive development in Africa, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) places a special emphasis on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Over the years, African Governments, regional and sub-regional organizations have made significant commitments towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. Gender disparities in Africa have largely disadvantaged women stem from patriarchy, customary law and the colonial legacy that continue to short-change women. As a result women’s emancipation and empowerment has become the focus of international programmes and conferences for purposes of integrating them into the development process on an equal basis with their male counterparts. Within the past three decades, the United Nations organized World Conferences on Women in Mexico City (in 1975), Copenhagen (in 1980), Nairobi (in 1985) and Beijing, China (in 1995). Women have fought to achieve equal rights in many parts of Africa. But as in other regions of the globe, a woman’s status varies by country and region. Africa is still developing in terms of gender equity. Though western countries are ahead, it took 703 years for the UK to progress from the Magna Carta (1215) to
the first votes for women (1918). A further 57 years elapsed before the sexual discrimination act (1975). Since few African countries have been independent for more than 60 years, it is unsurprising women's legal and cultural status lags behind countries like the UK. In some countries, women are still not equal in law. Even where they are legally equal to men, it is common for decisions to be taken by male heads of households or male local chiefs and leaders. In Africa, it is often the case that ‘traditionally’ women have fewer, if any, rights of inheritance. This leads to difficulties accessing land or finance. But there are exceptions, such as in northern regions of Mozambique, where certain groups are matrilineal – In sub-Saharan Africa, 81% of boys were enrolled at primary school during 2005-2009, compared to only 77% of girls (UNESCO Institute for Statistics – UIS). Though many governments are committed to providing equal education for girls, in practice girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys.

The reasons for girls’ lower enrolment in primary and secondary schooling include the tendency of poor families to spend available money (needed for school fees or the costs of books and uniforms) on the education of boys, because males are viewed as the future breadwinners. Furthermore, the expectation that girls will carry out domestic and household work and the pressure in some cultures for girls to marry young, particularly where they are seen as an economic burden on families. But providing girls with a good education is vital for a country’s development. When women are equipped with learning and share decisions about families and livelihoods, the productivity of a society rises. The health of a nation also improves with the education of girls. When women are aware about good nutrition and diet, the benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of hygiene, the risks of disease and illness in families is much lower.
The increasing number of women in government positions is also of significant benefit in effecting change on vital issues. Some nations – such as Rwanda and Tanzania – have created a constitutional requirement for the government to include a certain number of women. (Mongella 2000).

Even where there are no quotas, African governments are beginning to include more female politicians. In Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, became the first woman to be President of a modern African nation. In 2012, Joyce Banda became Malawi’s first female President. This shows societies are changing. African women are increasingly able to choose their own course in life. It is no longer uncommon to find women running successful businesses in Africa alongside having a family. These women are happy to embrace a new set of challenges brought by such freedom.

**Gender development in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe has always strived to achieve gender equality since its political independence in 1980. Over the years, in its continued commitment to removal of all forms of sex discrimination in the society, the government has alluded to several national and international gender declarations and conventions. Among these are the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); and the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (National Gender Policy, 2004:1). In the process, many policies were put in place to advance gender equality. The gender affirmative action policy of 1992, the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission, and the National Gender Policy of 2004 are illustrative.

In 1999, the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in Zimbabwe presented its findings noting, among other things, that gender disparities persisted
at all levels of education (Nziramasanga Commission, 1999:173). As a follow up, the Zimbabwean government launched the National Gender Policy in March 2004 whose goal, *inter alia*, was “to eliminate all negative economic, social and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede equality and equity of sexes” (National Gender Policy, 2004:3). One of the objectives of the policy is “to promote equal opportunities for women and men in decision making in all areas and all levels” (National Gender Policy, 2004:3). In response to the above policy, the Public Service Commission sent a circular, referenced G/46/200 dated 30 April 2004, to all government ministries requesting input as to how best gender balance could be attained in their respective ministries. However, in spite of these measures there appears to be little impact in practice. For example, in the student governing bodies of Zimbabwe Tertiary institutions, there seem to be far fewer women than men.

In many countries, concerns about gender disparities in education have focused on student performance, particularly “in terms of under-achievement of girls, differences in access at various levels of schooling, dropout rates in subjects taken and these have evoked a range of explanations and policies around gender gaps in educational outcomes” (Davies, 1990:61). However, the question of gender disparities in the management structures of schools and colleges has received little attention, despite the fact that “there is recognition in education of both the importance of equal opportunity and the strengths that women bring to management” (Coleman, 1994). Under-representation of women in educational management is not only experienced in Zimbabwe, but in many other countries too. Coleman (2001) noted that “women in educational management are a minority in the UK, but they are also in a minority in most other countries, both those in comparable levels of development and those that constitute the newly emerging economies”. On that note, the common assertion is that “women teach and men manage” in schools, still holds true despite a multitude of strategies to rectify the gender imbalance in educational management. In an effort to redress the
situation, researches on under-representation of women in management have been carried out in some countries as discussed here.

A review of literature by authorities such as am Mongella (2000), among others, reflects much debate and discourse about the principal reasons for the under-representation of women in educational management. However, it is clear that this mainly concerns developed countries such as the UK and the USA. In South Africa, the issue has received the attention of some researchers in the past years. In Zimbabwe there have been some debates on women and leadership which led to the development of policies intended to increase women’s participation in decision making positions generally and in school headships in particular. However, it has not been clearly established why under-representation of women still persists.

In an attempt to address the gender equality issues in Zimbabwe, the Labour Relations Act was introduced in 1985. It states that, “no employer should discriminate against any employee on the grounds of race, tribe or place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex.” Other legislation put in place included the Legal Age of Majority Act, Equal Pay Regulations and Sexual Discrimination Removal Act, to mention only a few.

These enactments had varying impact at different levels of the education system. At the school level, increment in the enrolment of girls rose by 49.0% at primary school level, 41.4% at Form 4 level, and 34.0% at Form 6 level by 1993 (Dorsey, 1996:18). At tertiary level, universities realised an increase of 30.2% while primary teachers’ colleges achieved 50.1% in the enrolment of female students (Chabaya, 1997). However, in the area of educational management, women remained glaringly under-represented; in primary school headship positions too. In the case of universities, Gaidzanwa (1992:10), pointed out that “the University (of Zimbabwe) provided an atmosphere and opportunities for female academics with little experience to join in administration, but the higher levels of university
administration remained male dominated”. Other research, conducted by Gaidzanwa in 1992, revealed that only 12.0% of senior public positions were held by women in Zimbabwe (UNICEF Update, 1994:3).

In response to the persistent gender disparity in decision-making positions in Zimbabwe, the government introduced the gender affirmative action policy in 1992. In turn, the Public Service Commission responded to the affirmative action policy by coming up with specific policies meant to expedite the promotion of women teachers to headship positions in both primary and secondary schools. For example, Public Service Circular No.11 (1991:2), states that heads should identify women who could be promoted to headship grade without reference to seniority and recommend them to be given schools to head. Public Service Circular No.22 (1996) and Public Service Circular No.1 (1997), encouraged women teachers to apply for school management posts. All these were measures taken to speed up the promotion of more women teachers to school leadership positions.

By contrast, as of June 2004, there were 246 secondary school heads in Masvingo province but of this figure, only 14 (5.60%) were female heads and 8 (3.25%) were female deputy heads (Chabaya, pers. comm., June 2004). In the case of primary schools, there were a total of 693 school heads and only 68 (9.81%) were female heads while 56 (8.08%) were female deputy heads (Chabaya, pers. comm., 2004). The figures suggested barriers to leadership that were much stronger and perhaps of a different type to the barriers to women’s education (Longwe & Clarke, 1999:12). In relation to the extent to which Zimbabwe has achieved gender equality among its citizens, a 1998 Human Development Report on Zimbabwe described the country as being a “highly unequal society”. Additionally, Zimbabwe ranked only 109th in the global gender rates relative to access, control and ownership of economic resources and position of decision-making (National Gender Policy, 2004:1).
It can be seen from this background that in Zimbabwe, policies and legislations have been put in place designed to address the problem of women’s under-representation in positions of educational leadership, yet gender inequalities persist. Hence in this study we investigated and analysed the factors that women teachers consider as barriers to their advancement to headship positions in Zimbabwean primary schools. Specifically, we sought to identify factors perceived by women school heads to be causes of persistent under-representation of women in school headship positions.

Important to this research is the work of Gaidzanwa (1992). She found out that during the colonial era, no female students occupied influential positions in students’ representative councils. Governance in education is a very critical aspect. Without leadership there is anarchy in the system (Taylor 2007, Bong, 2004). Most available literature on gender has attacked the area of female administrators at the work place. Whitehead (2005), studied gender inequity at Cape Town University and found out that women were under represented on the University staff in all faculties and clustered in the lower ranks. Most studies in developing countries have tended to concentrate on gender inequalities in education at the primary and secondary school levels and especially for women and girls who live in the rural areas. According to Sall (2009), very few studies have been concerned with inequalities for women in higher education and academic carrier. All these provide a point of departure to this study.

In a study of factors that influence selection into the SRC, Gwirayi (2010), found out that 84.4% of the participants alleged that the SRC president’s role was for male students while 13.6% believed in a female SRC president. Furthermore, the study revealed that only 15.6% of the interviewed students thought that the president’s role could be occupied by either a
male or female student. Gwirayi (2010) also found out that 64.4% of the participants considered the position of SRC Secretary General to be appropriate for male students while 26.7% believed it was possible for female students to occupy the position.

Chimanikire (2009), argued that “student activism” is largely regarded as a male students’ domain. Due to the fact that, women have been socialised to believe that leadership is for men, they prefer participating in informal community based activities. In this same vein, some scholars agree that due to the African culture, it is common that male students resort to violence to get their opinions across; female students shun participating for fear of being harassed (Gaidzanwa, 1992; Sweetman, 2000; Sall, 2000). Gaidzanwa (1992), in her analysis of class, gender and cultural issues in student politics at the University of Zimbabwe found out that male students’ violence and cultural beliefs resulted in a few female students participating in the SRC. In this same line of thought, Sweetman (2000), says traditional attitudes towards female leadership lead women to prefer supporting male to female candidates. Sweetman (2000), explains that gender discrimination begins at home and later at school through the roles and duties girls are prescribed to perform. As a result, girls grow with the perception that men should be the household and community leaders whereas wives should play the subordinate, supportive and domestic roles (Longwe in Sweetman, 2000).

Families also play a part in disregarding women’s potential in politics. In most families, women are told not to be involved in politics because it is regarded as a disgrace to the family Sawyer (2000). Female students are urged to play their roles as good and respectful women by staying at home looking after the family (Sweetman, 2000; Gaidzanwa, 1992). Thus it can be concluded that because of socialisation, young women themselves believe that politics is a male reserve, dirty, unethical and unfeminine.
Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009), and Dudu, Mawera and Gonye (2008), are of the view that a gender bias creates an obstacle at the recruitment stage itself. When it comes to remuneration the law proclaims equality but it is seldom put into practice. The inbuilt conviction that women are capable of less work than men or less efficient than men governs this injustice of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work (Sweetman, 2000). Women on the way up the corporate ladder discover that they must be much better than their male colleagues to reach the top. Once at the top, male colleagues and subordinates often expect much greater expertise and efficiency from a woman boss than from a male boss. Conditioned by social and psychological tradition women colleagues too do not lend support to their own sex. Working in such conditions inevitably puts much greater strain on women than what men experience. These problems tend to make women less eager to progress in their careers. Indeed many of them choose less demanding jobs for which they may even be over-qualified (Ohrio, 2002). Diverse skills and abilities are acquired in tertiary institutions (Mama, 2001). Tertiary institutions consist of polytechnics, teacher training colleges; vocational skills training centres and universities. Kasante (2001), says participation in tertiary institutions promotes democratic values some of them being transparency, rule of law, consensus, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Chikwanha (2009), argues that democratic behaviour is most likely to occur when students have acquired certain knowledge, understanding and beliefs. Democratic behaviour is revealed through female students’ understanding of how a democratic government is supposed to function and also through their ability to appreciate personal responsibilities in students’ governance. Female students’ commitment to student governance can also be witnessed in their willingness to be active participants.
In other words, tertiary institutions shape the characteristics of students as they prepare to go into the world of employment. It is, however, sad to note that the educational environment may be designed to ensure patriarchal consciousness (Kasante, 2002). This is witnessed in the subjects that female students are encouraged to take and the roles they are expected to take within classrooms (Mbani, 2005). Some of the subjects that female students are encouraged to take are home economics and literature while male students are encouraged to study subjects such as physics, chemistry, business management and engineering (Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 2004; Zimbabwe National Youth Policy, 2010).

Inline with these assertions, FAWE (2004), points out that a cursory glance at the gender ratios of students and academic staff in African institutions reveals an imbalance that favours men against women. Therefore, it is important to change the way boys and schools staff members view females to improve their status in the society. Kearney (2000) agrees that the inclusion of female students in major decision-making processes will improve their involvement in decision-making in the future. In addition, through active participation, female students will be in better positions to earn a living in the future (Gaidzanwa, 1992; Mama, 2008).

Different from that, some scholars have agreed that female students’ involvement in decision-making helps them in exchanging intellectual ideas which are needed in the development era we are in (Mama, 2008). Furthermore, female students should be involved in decision-making processes because they have direct knowledge concerning issues that affect their welfare on or out of campus. Moreover, Kasante (2001), maintains that female students’ involvement in decision-making processes improves the level of acceptance of the
decisions which are made in their institutions as compared to imposing decisions they are unaware of. This is also supported by the shared Governance theory which promotes equal participation in the running of tertiary institutions. Kearney (2000), declares that administration members should ensure that before a final decision is made, both male and female students would have had the opportunity to challenge openly the feasibility of the decision to be made.

Although leadership and gender can be a topic of study in social sciences, in the education sector it is very critical because the student voice in education needs to be heard. Bennis, in Tong (2009), defined leadership by the roles they performed. To him the first job of a leader is to define a vision for the organisation. Leadership is the capacity to translate that vision into reality. Shaba (2000) gave some definitions of leadership from some great men. According to John Queens Adams, the 6th US President (1927) “if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more; you are a leader”. Harry Truman (1884 – 1972) President of USA proclaimed that “my definition of a leader is a man who can persuade people to do what they do not want to do, or do what they are too lazy to do and like it”. This means that, there is influence, there is guidance and direction. Leadership is, therefore, an art of influencing and directing people in such a way that will win their obedience, confidence, loyalty and their co-operation in achieving common objectives. Thus female students in tertiary institutions should fine tune their leadership skills by being involved in the student governance bodies. Rathberger (2009), notes that, the feminine leadership style emphasises co-operation over competition, intuition as well as rational thinking in problem solving team structures where power and influence are shared with the group.
Historically leadership was considered masculine that is the belief that men make better leaders than women. Sweetman (2000), indicated that the idea is still common today. Although the number of female leaders has increased, they are often not given much value as compared to their male counterparts. According to Lowe and Nyakujarah (2011), such thinking may lead to people having difficulty in accepting women as leaders in the workplace, unlike the great man theory of leadership which assumes that the capacity of leadership can be taught and learned. This provides a point of departure to this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There seems to be unequal representation of gender in the student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. Despite the Zimbabwean government’s efforts of adopting international and national conventions that promote gender equality, female students seem to be under-represented in governance organisations within tertiary institutions. Such a scenario was seen by the researcher during her studies at Africa University and experience as a lecturer at Nyadire Teachers College. Despite the broader patterns of gender inequality persisting in the tertiary sector, public higher education also remains the main route to career advancement for women in Africa. Their constrained access, therefore, poses a constraint to the pursuit of more equitable and just modes of political, economic, and social development. Moreover, it is broadly accepted that rectifying gender injustice requires a degree of intellectual specialisation, as can be indexed by the coming in of gender studies within African universities and colleges. The interconnections between gender and all other social divisions are now increasingly understood to require competent analysis and theorisation, as well as carefully designed practical and policy interventions. These constitute the intellectual focus of most African gender studies units.. In most countries where feminism has the most impact, women account for no more than 10% managers and 3% of company director and
this issue has received the attention of international organizations (Onsongo, 2004). Adelabu and Akinsolu (2010), in their study at the University of Abuja in Nigeria established that only 15% of the influential positions were occupied by women, a large gap from the recommended 35% in the Nigerian Gender Policy. Mama (2008), also noted that women rarely participated in continental seminars or workshops held for institutions of higher learning and in instances where they participated, their ability to effectively influence decisions was very low. This shows that although there has been a gradual improvement in the participation of women in the 20th Century, women are still found in the lower echelons of power within tertiary institutions (Gaidzanwa, 2007; Mama, 2008 and Mudiwa, 2010).

Confirming this, Mudiwa (2010), in her study in university leadership found out that in 117 universities in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), 105 (89.7%) were led by male Vice Chancellors while only 12 were led by female Vice Chancellors. These inequality characteristics reflect no difference in the nature of female students’ participation in student governance bodies in tertiary institutions. Mamashela et al. (2009), in the study on the roles played by universities in instilling democratic values in students, found out that at the University of Nairobi, 62% of female students never held any leadership positions. On the other hand, 72% of male students reported they had been in leaderships positions. Mamashela et al. (2009) also found out that at the University of Cape Town 91% of males and only 9% of female students had been involved in student governance organisations.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to interrogate the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions’ governing bodies.
1.4 Research Questions

The research questions which guided this study included:

1. To what extent is gender equity evident in the governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions?
2. How do factors surrounding tertiary institution in Zimbabwe influence female participation in student governing bodies?
3. Why is gender equity important in tertiary institutions?
4. What strategies can be put in place to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the study will benefit female students, deans of students, policymakers and tertiary institute’s administrators. The policy makers and implementers will know the importance of gender equity in student governing bodies.

The research will add to the literature on gender equity in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Policy makers and administrators will be able to use the information obtained from this study to restrictive gender equity policies. The findings of this study will hopefully bring information which could contribute towards good practices in S.G.B leadership which promote gender equity.

The study is of particular significance to some academics and other researchers as it has some empirical evidence that may be useful to the debate on gender equity in tertiary institutions. The research attempted to create a new thinking on strategies to alleviate gender inequity in student governing bodies, the research hoped the findings, might bring political change to
participation and action by female students in tertiary institution. The researcher hopes that there is unmasking of some gendered illusions and also that both sexes can act positively towards each other and hence know the impotance of gender equity. This thesis was impotant to me because it enlightened me on the importance of gender equity. As a college student warden it helped me on ways to encourage females to take up leadership post.

This study could contribute to available researches on the participation of female students in students’ governance organisations within tertiary institutions. Furthermore, the study could promote further studies on the topic. The researcher also believes that this study brought awareness to administration members and students on the need to involve female students in students’ governance organisations. In addition, the study could encourage members of administration within tertiary institutions to formulate or implement policies that seek to promote female students participation.

1.6 Assumptions
The study proceeded on the assumption that there was gender inequity in tertiary institutions student governing bodies. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that the research subjects were willing to contribute helpful information that should help in improving the strategies to counter the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations.

1.7 Delimitations
The study is a case study of Harare Province tertiary institutions. It focused on the nature of gender representation in student governing bodies of tertiary institutions, the factors leading to equity or inequity and the amendments needed for improvement. Harare Province consists of the polytechnic colleges, Agriculture colleges, Universities, teachers colleges. There are urban, rural, government and private institutions in Harare Province. The researcher limited herself to studying eight tertiary institutions in Harare. The study limited itself to Harare
because the researcher is a lecturer at Nyadire teachers college, thus Harare was accessible to the researcher. Gender equity is a broad area thus the researcher limited herself to studying of gender equity in student governing bodies.

1.8 Limitation

A possible limitation of this study was the issue of research bias. Diarising helped the researcher to be more aware of personal bias during interviews. Another limitation was that participants were not availing themselves for interviews due to other commitments. To overcome this, the researcher extended the data collecting period. Further more the researcher faced some misconceptions and lack of knowledge on gender issues. Anticipating this challenge, the researcher explained the basic gender related terminology to the participants.

1.9 Research Methodology

The method used for this study was largely qualitative in nature even though it was supported by some statistical data covering figures on number of elected males and females in the student governance bodies. This section presented the qualitative research approach which was used in this study. It used the interpretive paradigm. It focused on the importance of the researcher’s perspective and the interpretative nature of social reality. The goal of interpretive research was to understand and interpret human behaviour. Thus, in this research, perceived ideas on the challenges of gender equity in tertiary institutions were interpreted from views of participants in the research instruments. Krathwohl (2000), says a qualitative research approach permits the description of phenomena and events in an attempt to explain and understand them. The researcher focused on perceptions of the female and male students involved in the politics (See Sections 3.4 and 3.5).
The study focused on the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions. The research was based on a case study of Harare Province. The targeted population consisted of all students and Deans in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions (See Section 3.7). The accessible population of this study consists of eight tertiary institutions.

The sample of this study was derived from all students who held positions in student governance bodies, final year students and the Deans of students in the eight tertiary institutions. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is the process whereby the researcher chooses particular elements from the population in order for them to be representative or informative about the research topic (Thomas, 2009). See Section 3.9.

The instruments used in this research are open ended questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions (See Section 3.9). The researcher sought permission to carry out the study from the faculty of education. With the letter of introducing the researcher from Zimbabwe Open University, permission was sought from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, as an ongoing process through the inquiry (Creswell, 2012). Data analysis consisted of examining, categorising tabulating and combining evidence to address the initial position of a study. In this study, the researcher used triangulation of data analysis. Qualitative researcher's tool were geared towards trustworthiness and encompassed issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (O’Leary, 2004). Credibility is all about the internal validity, it answered that the researcher has recorded accurately, analysed and interpreted the phenomenon under study. In this study, triangulation was undertaken through many sources of collecting data which are open ended questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. The researcher also examined previous studies to assess the points of
agreement and disagreement. The researcher employed triangulation of data, use of member checking, observing the situation over a long period of time in order to develop an in depth understanding of the phenomenon, peer examination and use of thick description to convey findings.

On dependability, the study was described in detail so that the researcher assesses the extent to which proper research practices were followed. The researcher also used audiotapes in interviews to augment field notes, wrote down all the questions asked in order to make sense at a later date Transferability, according to Sheton (2004), measures the extent to which the finding of the study can be applied to other situations in this research. It was established that by extending the types of sites and context in which the phenomenon was investigated.

In carrying out a research study, the researcher was concerned with the well-being of the participants to protect them from being harmed. The researcher avoided the exploitation of the participants’ and sought informed consent, seeking permission from the participants and details are in chapter 3.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The words defined below are peculiar to this study.

1.10.1 Gender

In this research, the term gender was used to refer to the qualities of male and female which, while directly associated with the biological distinction between men and women, go far beyond mere biology to encompass all aspects of our lives as aspects of ideology and culture.

Shaba (2000, p. 10), in her study uses the term to mean a social construction of men and women in a given historical context. Gender carries with it the expectations held as to likely
behaviour, characteristics and aptitudes men and women have and responsibilities that are not biologically determined. The word gender is used interchangeably with the word sex. However, sex refers to the biological difference between men and women, whilst gender refers to the differences between men and women, which are learnt through the socialisation process and through the culture of a given society. Throughout this study the term gender was used in that sense of socialisation and culture.

1.10.2 Gender equity

Gender equity is a process of achieving fairness and justice among men and women. The fairness and justice is in relation to distribution of opportunities, responsibilities and resources as well as in accessing and controlling benefits and resources. To ensure fairness, measures must often be made available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages. Gender equity entails proportional distribution of social resources and services as well as proportional representation.

Rathberger (2003), Sawyer (2002) and Mbani (2005), are of the view that, gender equity leads to gender equality. Gender equality means there is the same valuation of men and women in society, sameness of enjoyment of rights, power opportunities, treatment and control of resources between males and females in society.

1.10.3 Gender socialisation

The socialisation of gender is re-enforced at the school. Dyanda and Mavhuna (2004), alludes that schools often channel learners into occupations, thus prejudicial and biased teacher attitudes and expectations and stereotype constrain girls’ aspirations.
1.10.4 **Socialisation**

It is a process by which a society transmits, through its agents, such as parents, teachers, its cultural values to individuals so that they can function properly as its members. According to Kearney (2001), socialisation is the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of a community where children are socialised.

1.10.5 **Governance**

Weiner and Luc (2001, p. 2) define governance as formal and informal exercise of authority under laws, policies and rules that articulate the rights and responsibilities of various actors including the rule by which they interact.

Kezar and Eckel (2004, p. 371) define governance as a multilevel concept including several different boards and processes with different decision-making functions. For this study, governance means organisation and management of student bodies. Governance is therefore, the processes of using political authority in the carrying out of institutional duties as well as negotiating matters between parties within an institution.

1.10.6 **Tertiary institutions**

Tertiary institutions are higher learning institutions which offer advanced non-compulsory education after secondary education. These include universities, colleges, polytechnics or vocational training centres.

1.10.7 **Student governance organisation**

Student governance organisation is a students' body which serves as the mediator between students and the administration in addressing the needs and interests of students.
1.10.8 Leadership

Shaba (2000, p. 54) asserts that, leadership is the ability to motivate, manage, organise, plan and control a group of people. Leadership is about inspiring others setting an example. It involves the process of consensus building and shared power as of equal importance to achieving desired goals. It is about tackling the core-issues that face the organisation or group and getting the best out of people.

1.11 Organisation of Chapters

The study has five chapters. Chapter one covered key aspects such as the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, assumptions of the study, delimitations and ethical consideration. Chapter two reviewed and analysed literature related to the study. Chapter three discussed how the research was designed and conducted. Chapter four presented, analysed and discussed the research findings. Finally chapter five gave a summary, conclusion and recommendations of the whole study.

1.12 Chapter summary

This chapter highlighted the context of the problem. It examined the background to the study. It then highlighted the statement of the problem, the research questions that directed this research, purpose of study, objectives of the study, assumptions of the study, significance of the study and definition of key terms. The selected methodology was also highlighted. The next chapter focuses on the challenges of gender equity in student governance leadership, through exploring the review of related literature as it relates to gender issues in Zimbabwean tertiary institutes. The intention is to find the gaps that this research could then fill in.
CHAPTER 2 : REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight and discuss issues related to works of other authorities with regard to challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. In this chapter literature is explored and theories are considered in order to outline the foundational assumptions that guided the research questions, design and interpretations of the present study (Merriam, 2009). The literature and theoretical frameworks also serve to position the present study in how it contributes to the literature or advances, refines, or revises what is already known (Merriam, 2009).

2.2 Conceptual Framework; Gender equity in student governance

In the conceptual framework of this study, the term governance in student governing bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institutions will be defined.

2.2.1 Governance

In view of the key concept in this study, Governance in higher education is a term that is highly contested, vague and highly contextual. The concept of Governance is not new, and it means different to different people. The actual meaning of the concept depends on the level of governance. The concept has been around in both political and academic discourse for a long time.

Defining governance

Governance is a relational concept whose meaning depends on the context in which it is applied (Hyden, 2006). Governance is viewed as the structure of relationship that authorises policies, plans and decisions (Gallagher 2007 in Meek 2003). According to the Webster, The Third International Dictionary (2000), governance is the actor process of governing specifically authoritative direction and control. Todaro and Smith (2003) agree with the above
by declaring that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) uses the term good governance in its policy on Human Rights and democratisation on good governance. By governance we mean the manner in which power is exercised by the government in the management of a country’s social and economic resources. Good governance is the exercise of power by various levels of government. That is effective, honest, equitably, transparent and accountable (Meek, 2003). However, the above definition appears shallow. Webb (2002) observes that the definition, as it appears on policy for CIDA, is restrictive in that it reduces the concept to activities and power relations that involve government alone. It does not consider the influence, needs contributions and responsibility of civil society or the private sector. Governance issues are closely related to several development activities and can be approached as a theme that cuts across projects which meet other CIDA priorities. The topic of governance grew up in the Anglophone academic world in the 1980s and 1990s, although the term also appears in older texts, for instance, in Bong (2006). The term governance was modelled on, but deliberately distinct from the term government. Both terms are derived from the Latin word Guberi meaning to steer and control.

**Difference between governance and government**

When most people hear the word governance, they think of government because both words have the word govern. However, governance is about more than government. According to Bong (2004), it is complex yet universal force that exists in all societies. People use governance in their daily lives to manage human relationships just as corporations and countries use it to manage their activities. Governance comprises complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, excise their rights and obligations to mediate their differences (Weiner, 2001). Good governance addresses the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective problems. It is characterised by the principles of participation, transparency,
accountability and the rule of law, effectiveness equity and strategic vision. This is a research gap that needs to be attended to if the college administrators are to truly understand how to support female students with involvement in governance of organisation in their institutions.

Furthermore, in practice the principles translate into certain tangible things, such as, free, fair and frequent elections. Good governance also answers that civil society plays a role in setting priorities and making the needs of the most vulnerable people in society. As such the concept links very well with the topic under study which has a mission towards that goal where good governance is to promote woman’s advancement. Shared governance does not associate leadership with the effort of one individual as in the traditional theories (Gregson, 2003; Bong 2004). It focuses, rather on, a new concept of governance where responsibilities and activities are distributed across a wide range of people within each specific context. Cambel (2003) shared that leadership involved different units working together to archive a common goal.

**General aspects of governance**

Zvobgo (2014, p. 15), observes that governance has attracted a good deal of public interest because of its apparent importance in advancing the economic health of students’ corporate bodies and society as a whole. Zimbabwe also needs to add voice to the debate of students’ governing bodies and gender equity. Lorber (2003), defines governance as a concept of corporate management for both private and public institutions based on clearly defined principles which promote good management as fairness, transparency and accountability. The argument is that leaders of public and private institutions should be accountable to all internal and external stakeholders. Canadian International Development (2000), posits that governance is a concept that has developed considerably since it emerged in discussions of
development issues around the late 1950. Mitchell (2000), states that the first classic political science essay on the subject talked about the concept of governability which made the rule of law, the core of development. Rees (2005), notes that, with the end of the world war, governability gave way to the concept of governance. Carrington (2005), declares that the European Union has broader version on the concept of governance. Governance in the above view comprises the institutions’ processes and traditions which determine how law is exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens have their say. Thus, governance is not the sole concern of the government but all of these involved in decision-making.

Bunting and Maasen in Webb (2002), point out that Zimbabwe has signed charters and treaties that embody the broad values of governance and that have specific obligation and responsibilities that citizens should hold governance accountable for complying with policy and intuitions. Gregson (2003), explains the above by mentioning that credible governance processes can only be achieved through effective governance of resources and continuously pushing for political, legal and administrative reforms that are required in the country. Barber (2010), states that, in Africa policy and directions for improving performance are embedded in governance. The underlying issue is that a crisis of governance is basically a crisis of board of directors. Ohrio (2002), cites that UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan has stated that good governance is perhaps the single important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. Gregson (2003), adds on to say that if governance matters, so does the need for more reliable and valid data on key governance process. According to Hyden (2006), based on the perceptions of experts within each country, governance assessments were undertaken in 16 developing transitional societies representing 51 percent of the world’s population. Governance is gaining currency in the contemporary world agrees with Bong, (2006). Hobbes that governance arises from society and is needed to reduce conflict between individuals. The state can, however, be given unlimited sovereignty because that could pose as threat to
individual freedom derived from natural law. Locke and Hobbes are in agreement on the idea of social contract. This is an unwritten agreement between the rulers and the ruled. According to Locke, a government is a mandate or trust given by the people. Governance’s purpose is to remove destructive conflict. It is a constitutional arrangement which both state and civil society respect.

Meek (2003), substantiates the above observation by declaring that good governance is influenced by the existence of a well-crafted democratic constitution that enables the institutions to manage their affairs effectively, while at the same time empowering the citizens, to participate in good governance. Interestingly, according to the academic approach the generic understanding of governance is the management of recourses and policy making by means of exercising authority. Jordan (2009), mentions that governance is the sum of many ways in which individuals, institutions public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interest may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. Taylor, Sinha and Goshen (2007), agrees with the above by declaring that good governance is a normative conception of the values according to which the act of governance is realised and the method by which groups of social actors interact in a certain social context.

The lack of a generally accepted definition of the concept is compensated by the identification of principles that strengthen good governance in any institutions. The researcher’s conception of governance is that it is a rule of interaction at any given organisation. It involves processes and decision-making. In this study, governance means organisation and management.
Shared governance in tertiary institutions

Shared governance theory was introduced in the 1960s when colleges began slackening governance processes in tertiary institutions in the United States of America (USA) (Onsongo, 2007). Onsongo (2007), holds that shared governance concerns allowed certain groups of people the room to exercise major responsibilities in decision-making within tertiary institutions. In the same way, Moss Rascuin (2012), views shared governance as a communal system of government which allows the people affected by decisions to contribute in decision-making processes. In agreement to these assertions, Rathberger (2003) explains that shared governance involves sharing power or authority in academic decisions among the board of trustees, faculty, students, staff, administrators, the faculty senate and unions. People can be involved in governance through elected representation or giving groups of people the room to exercise primary responsibilities in the designing and implementation of their institutional policies (Onsongo, 2007). In shared governance, not everyone has a chance to participate at every stage of the decision-making processes and neither, do the elected representatives have the overall say on all the decision-making processes.

Apart from that, Ogunniyi (2006) substantiates the above observation by declaring that good governance is influenced by the existence of a well-crafted democratic constitution that enables the institutions to manage their affairs effectively; while at the same time empowering the citizen to try to participate in good governance. The benefits of shared governance have been experienced in institutions such as, Capella and Villanova Universities among others, (Rathberger, 2003). Shared governance principles are in line with the Liberal Feminist principles that every human being should have the freedom to participate in decision-making processes. Thus in this research, aspects which prohibit shared governance
were analysed. Thus, the challenge of gender equity in student governance bodies became an issue of concern.

**The participation of women in political governance organisations**

Although the research focused on the participation of female students, the nature of women’s participation in politics is also reviewed. This has been considered as a way of demonstrating how female students’ nature of participation is closely related to that of women in governance organisations. The Women’s Campaign Fund (WCF) (2010) explains that only 22% of women held executive positions in the Lower House and 24% of women had positions in the Upper House of the government of the United States of America (U.S.A). In the United Kingdom, of the 650 seats in the Lower House of Assembly only 143 (22%) were occupied by women in the year, 2010.

The WCF (2010) also contends that in Canada, out of the 308 seats of the Members of Parliament, 76 (24.7%) were held by women. Statics from Iceland also revealed that in 2010, out of the 127 seats in parliament only 27 seats were occupied by women. Apart from that, although Iceland has one of the first women presidents in the world, it is one country that has not promoted equal participation in other executive positions within its government. In Netherlands, out of the 150 seats, only 59 (39.3%) were occupied by women (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2011). This shows that, despite the moves made by governments in adopting protocols that promote gender equality, women were still underrepresented in governance structures.

Important to this study is the work of Lowe and Nyakujarah (2011) who say, since the adoption of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997, the proportion of women in Parliament in Southern Africa increased from 17.5% in 1997 to about 24% in
2010. Nevertheless, Lowe and Nyakujarah (2011) point out that, out of the 263 in the Upper House of Assembly, only 85 (32.3%) seats were held by women in the year 2010 in Tanzania. Moreover, the number of women in the Botswana’s government fell from 18% in 1992 to 11.1% in 2004. It further dropped to 7.9% in their October 2009 elections (Lowe and Nyakujarah, 2011).

Apart from that, the number of women in the Namibian government dropped from 30.8% to 26.9% in their November 2009 elections while Mauritius had a slight improvement of 17.1% representation to 18% in its parliament in their May 2010 elections. Furthermore, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana and the Democratic Republic of Congo are rated last in terms of the representation of women in their parliaments. Nevertheless, South Africa is one of the Southern African countries which have a fair representation of women in its parliament, a 42.7% in its Lower and Upper House Assemblies. These figures confirm the SADC Gender Protocol Barometer (2010), which claims that women are still underrepresented in most of the Southern African countries. If the trend of women participation in politics is still low, what is the nature of female students’ participation in tertiary institutions’ in student governance? Are tertiary institutions implementing any measures to promote the participation of female students in student governance?

2.3. Theoretical framework: Liberal feminism theory.

Having looked at the conceptual framework, the researcher now turns on to the theoretical framework, even though qualitative methodology does not necessarily need theoretical framework because induction, which is the guiding reasoning for this paradigm, is itself theory forming than theory testing. However, the above (2.3) theoretical framework has been identified as compatible with this inquiry. Before the 18th Century, women and their spouses
contributed equally in productive work which was then confined in their homes (Whitehead, 2004). The Liberal Feminist’ theory emerged in the 18th and 19th Centuries, a period that marked an increase in industrial innovations in Western Europe. Due to the availability of capital and machinery, businesses experienced rapid growth. Tong (2009), contends that this resulted in the bourgeois men conveyance of their work from the homes into public workplaces. At this period women who were married to bourgeois men were left in their homes with little productive work (Tong, 2009). This era led to a rise in unequal opportunities among men and women in economic, political and educational sectors of the society. Mulugeta (2007), purports that women were only given responsibilities of child care and household maintenance and were not allowed occupying positions in politics. Women who were ambitious to contest for political positions were suspected of being unstable or men challengers.

To further rebut women from engaging in influential roles, school administrators were unwilling to admit girls into schools or programmes that trained them for certain types of jobs (Whitehead, 2004). Due to these restrictions, women could not access esteemed positions in society (Tong, 2009). Women were socialised to believe that only men could occupy influential positions in society, thus, blocking women’s emancipation. Tong (2009), says women lacked liberty and virtue because they were not allowed to participate in decision-making processes.

At this juncture, the Liberal Feminist theory is understood to have been partly a reaction to the Social Contract theory. The major proponents of the theory are Jean Jacque Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (Whitehead, 2004). These scholars believed that everyone has a role to play in society but that women could not compete with men. Tong (2009) cites
that Hobbes and Locke believed women were equal to men but to refuse them of equal political rights they suggested they were weaker to men due to their biological outlook. In addition, Tong explains that from the beginning, Rousseau believed that women were naturally created without the capacities to participate in political decision-making. In support of this assertion, Tong (2009), says Rousseau portrayed the development of rationality as the most important educational goals for boys but not for girls. Rousseau was committed to sexual dimorphism, the view that “rational” man is the perfect complement for “emotional” woman, and vice versa. As he saw it, men should be educated in virtues such as courage, temperance, justice and fortitude, whereas women should be educated in virtues such as docility, good humour and flexibility. These views are not what is on the ground in Zimbabwe, for the nation is striving for gender equity.

On the contrary, the Liberal Feminist theory argues that friendly relationships between men and women can be created through removing the customary and legal constraints that hinder women from their success. The Liberal Feminist theory argues, women should have equal chances with men in the “academy, the forum and the marketplace” (Tong, 2009). Thus this research also is advocating for equal education posts in the SGB of tertiary institutions.

The Liberal Feminist theory establishes that affirmative action and equal opportunity policies should be used to ensure equal opportunities between men and women (Tong, 2009). The Egalitarian Liberal Feminist theory asserts that the role of the government or institutions is to protect the civil political rights of every human being. Some of the rights that should be protected are freedom of speech, freedom to information, freedom of conscience, freedom of association, freedom of expression and privacy among others (Tong, 2009). In support of this Tong, says allowing people their freedom will result in political, legal and social equality.
Mulugeta (2007), agrees by saying, every person has the right to exercise their choices unrestricted by public beliefs or rules. Feminist writers are all concerned with women’s unequal position in the society; however, they contrast markedly with one another. Some of these theories are radical and black feminism. This research is based on liberal feminism and it looks for explanations of gender inequalities in the social and cultural attitudes. Unlike radical feminists, liberal feminists do not see women’s subordination as part of a larger system of structure. For example, liberal feminists are concerned with sexism and discrimination against women in the work place, educational institutions and the media as is the case of this study of challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies. Liberal feminists tend to focus their energies on establishing and protecting equal opportunities for women through legislation and other democratic means. Liberal feminists seek to work through the existing systems to bring about reform in a gradual way. They are more moderate in their aims and methods than radical feminists, who call for an overthrow of the existing system, while liberal feminists have contributed greatly to women advancement over the past century (Whitehead, 2004).

This study focused on two classifications of Liberal Feminism which are Classical Liberal and Egalitarian Liberal Feminism. Classical Liberal Feminism emphasises on the right to be free from authoritative force. Tong (2009), says the belief of Classical Liberal Feminism is that coercion will only be used when it is meant to protect the rights of any being. The state should protect people’s freedom of speech, conscience, expression, association, the right to vote and the right to compensation if one’s rights have been violated. According to this subgroup of Liberal Feminism, women’s rights will be violated if they are hindered from exercising these rights.
Tong (2009), says in Egalitarian Liberal Feminism, the lack of empowering conditions explains the absence of women in decision-making positions. He further explains that, Egalitarian Liberal Feminists believe that the factors that hinder women’s participation in decision-making are laws and traditional beliefs. Egalitarian Liberal Feminism suggests that women movements should identify and eradicate the factors discriminating women in decision-making processes. F.A.W.E. (2006), explains that, apart from that, Egalitarian Liberal Feminism considers the role of the state or institutions to be the protection of its citizens' rights. The similarities between Classical and Egalitarian Liberal feminists are their emphasis on the fact that women have equal rights to men to participate in decision-making processes and the importance of protecting women’s rights, which are all important in this study.

Related to this work are the views of Stronquist (2007) that, to counter inequality, Liberal Feminist laws were put forward to advance the cause of women. These included the Seneca Falls Convention, the Equal Rights Amendment Act (ERA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 19th Constitutional Equity Amendments Act (2000). The Constitutional Amendment gave women the right to vote after seventy years of being excluded from voting. The conventions introduced by Liberal Feminists have led to the enactment of other laws that seek to enhance the participation of women at regional and international levels. These laws advocate for equal participation, opportunities in education, in employment or in politics (Whitehead, 2004).

The Liberal Feminist further advocated for women’s right through joining political action groups. Some of these organisations include the United States Women’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA), the National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC), the Women’s Equity Action
League (WEAL) and the National Organization for Women (NOW). According to Tong (2009), the aim of these groups was to improve the position of women through the application of laws that aimed at giving equal participation opportunities. These Liberal Feminist organisations also sought to increase public pressure on institutions in making them gender sensitive. These action groups have led to the emergence of women activists groups that are existent in this era. Thus to enhance an understanding of the theoretic framework of this research other related theories are explained below.

Opposite to the Liberal Feminist theory is the radical feminist theory. Radical Feminists assert that society is a patriarchy in which the classes of men are the oppressors of the class of women. They posit that because of patriarchy, women have come to be viewed as the "other" to the male norm and as such, have been systematically oppressed and marginalise. They further assert that men as a class benefit from the oppression of women. Radical Feminists seek to abolish patriarchy, and believe that the way to do this and to deal with oppression of any kind is to address the underlying causes of it through revolution.

In sum, the Liberal Feminist theory explains that everyone should have the freedom to participate in influential decision-making positions. What is most interesting about this theory is the fact that it believes that gender equality will be achieved not through the change of social structures within the society. Rather, the theory advocates for means such as, gender neutral socialisation, the use of equal representation rules, offering financial support to women who want to contest in politics as well as through breaking the “glass ceiling” that inhibit women from entering positions of authority. Furthermore, the Liberal Feminist theory believes in the altering of policies in making them gender sensitive which is relevant in this study (Whitehead, 2004).
However, although this theory was used as the framework for the study, it has some loopholes worth acknowledging. Some of the weaknesses of the Liberal Feminist theory are that it does not question power relations and hierarchical division of labour within institutions. Therefore, women remain under the control of men even if they occupy influential roles in governance (Stronquist, 2007). In addition, the Liberal Feminist theory promotes individualism as compared to communal participation which is considered as one of our African values. This is witnessed from the fact that women occupying positions of influence rarely promote other women to positions of influence. This is known as the “Pull Her Down Syndrome” (Mapfumo, 2007). The theory also clearly states that women prefer contesting in less challenging positions even if there are opportunities for them to take ranks of influence. This shows that women disadvantage themselves (Tong, 2009, Ford, 2002).

Despite these weaknesses, the theory clearly explains the conditions leading to the low participation of women in decision-making structures. In addition, the Liberal Feminist theory was used because it encourages women to take the duties that have traditionally been preserved for males. Apart from that, the researcher believes that if Liberal Feminist policies such as, Affirmative Action are applied, female students’ participation in governance structures in tertiary institutions will improve. Besides that, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a law which falls under Liberal Feminism, serves as the foundation for promoting equal access to education, health, employment and political rights. Furthermore, CEDAW led to the adoption of other gender equality policies like the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Security Council Resolution, (UNSCR) 1325 and the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) to mention but a
few. The 50 50 campaign which was advocated for by women organisations in the Zimbabwean 2008 harmonised elections derive from the Liberal Feminist theory (Moyo and Fox, 2000). However, coming closer home, a new theory of womanism is emerging. It is a form of feminism that acknowledges women’s natural contribution to the society; it is used by some in distinction of the term feminism and its association with white women. Womanism is a social theory deeply rooted in the racial and gender oppression of black women. There are varying interpretations on what the term womanist means and efforts to provide a concise and all-encompassing definition have only been marginally successful. The ambiguity within the theory allows for its continuous expansion of its basic tenets. At its core, womanism is a social change perspective based upon the everyday problems and experiences of black women and other women of minority demographics, but more broadly seeks methods to eradicate inequalities not just for black women, but for all people.

2.3.2 Ubuntu Theoretical Framework

The above theoretical framework originated in the west, it is equally important to look at an African originated framework. Samkange and Samkange (1980) wrote a munhu or Umuntu or human being is more than a biological being. According to Makuvaza (2001), there is a sense in which a white person differs in some important ways to a black Zimbabwean. There is no adequate translation of hunhu/ Ubuntu from Shona or Ndebele into English. It involves kindness, courtesy consideration between people, and a particular attitude to other people and to life. In the Shona society, a woman is respected (Mangena and Mukona 2010).

The spiritual idea of Ubuntu has direct relevance for education practice although difficult to translate into a single English word. It emphasises a number of human values, such as dignity, respect for authorities, honesty and courtesy. The ethical values of Ubuntu include respect for others, helpfulness, community, sharing, caring, trust and unselfishness. The
concept of Ubuntu in Zimbabwe is similar to that of other African cultures. In 1980 Samkange, a Zimbabwean historiographer, educator, journalist, author and African nationalist attempted to systematise an African epistemology in humanism. He emphasised three maxims which shape the philosophy of Hunhuiism or Ubuntuism:

1. To be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognising the humanity of others and on that basis establish respectful human relations with them.

2. If and when one is faced with decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life.

3. The king owes his status to including all powers associated with it to the will of the people under him.

Ubuntu is a concept widely used and debated in South Africa (Samkange, 1990). It is an essence of humanism. Ubuntu is a Nguni word meaning the quality of being human. This quality is embodied in the African proverb “Umuntu umuntu ngabantu”. This means that people owe their selfhood to others, that every individual is connected to others in the community working together for the well-being of all. In this research of challenges of gender equity, all the students and staff at tertiary institutions will entail willingness to participate, have unquestioning co-operation, worth openness and personal delight. Shumba (2011), has it that, Ubuntu embodies all those virtues that maintain harmony and the spirit of sharing among the members of the society. It implies an appreciation of traditional beliefs and awareness that an individual’s actions today are a reflection on the past and will have far reaching consequences for the future. A person with Ubuntu knows his or her place in the universe and is consequently able to interact gracefully with other (Samkange, 1980).
Ubuntu is used on a daily basis to settle disputes and conflicts at different levels in Africa and is, therefore, central to the idea of reconciliation. This philosophy is important because it provides Africans with a sense of self-identity, self-respect and achievement (Connor 2007). To deal with African problems in a positive manner by drawing on their humanistic values and have inherited and perpetuated throughout their history, it must be noted, however that, talking about African philosophy does not mean essentialising the African experience as being unique and valid outside actual lived experiences and histories (Gregson, 2003). The philosophy in its current state is about a resistance to the Western philosophical discourse that denies Africa its contribution to world knowledge and civilization.

Samkange (1980), argues in his book, Hunhuism or Ubuntuism, a Zimbabwe indigenous philosophy that, Ubuntu is a wellspring that flows within African existence and epistemology in which the two aspects Ubu and ntu constitute a wholeness and oneness because it is continuous and always in motion, Ubuntu cannot be fragmented. As a creative being, Ubuntu, Ubuntu is a maker of his/her world, which constantly emerges and constantly changes. In his/her existence, Ubuntu is the creator of politics, religion, and law (Connor 2007). Through these creative activities, Umuntu gains experience, knowledge and a philosophy of life based on truth. An African philosophy of life that guides the thinking and actions of Africans must, therefore, be found in their lived experiences and not from philosophical abstractions that have very little meaning in actual life (Samkange, 1980). This is where African philosophy differs remarkably from Western analytical and continental philosophies. The Ubuntu philosophy is very important to this study because, in this study females can also participate in student governance. Through Ubuntu, everyone is accepted into leadership as long as they are capable. Having looked at the theoretical framework it is imperative to look at the concept of gender, in relation to interrogation of the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.
2.4 The Concept of Gender

Gender refers to human traits linked by culture to each sex (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). Within a society, males are socialised to be masculine as females are taught to be feminine. To best understand the term gender, it is essential to first understand the term sex as these two terms are often confused and sometimes used interchangeably.

According to Barrow (2005), sex refers to the division of humanity into biological categories of male and female. As a biological distinction, sex is determined at the moment a child is conceived. Sex is also defined by Karumbidza (2008), as the biological difference between men and women, that is, their physical characteristics, external genitalia. According to Haralambos and Holban (2004, p. 94), sex is, therefore, a fact of biology, which is the physiological distinctiveness or state of being male or female.

Sifuniso (2000), define gender as the social meaning given to being either a man or a woman in a given society and the expectations held as to the character, attitude and likely behaviour of men and women. Gender, unlike sex, which is biological, is socially constructed. It influences the different behaviours, roles, responsibilities, identities and treatment of males and females in society. Gender depends on the culture and history of a particular society and differs from culture to culture. According to Meyer (2008), gender bias is the conscious or unconscious preference towards a certain sex.

Meyer (2008), defines gender bias as unequal treatment in employment opportunity and expectations due to attitudes based on the sex of an employee or group of employees. Gender bias is a preference or prejudice towards one gender over the other. Therefore, gender bias can be defined as unfair treatment of men and women because of their gender. Liu (2006), has it that gender bias occurs when people make assumptions regarding behaviours, abilities or preferences of others based upon their gender. The understanding of the gender concept helps
us to understand the unequal relations between men and women. It helps us to understand how female oppression is constructed and perpetuated in society.

Since terminology such as gender, gender equity and equality, and women empowerment features frequently, the basic definitions of these concepts will be furnished below. Guiso (2008), stated that the conceptual distinction between sex and gender was developed by Anne Oakley in 1972. According to Oakley in Guiso (2008), sex is connected with biology, whereas “gender identity of men and women in any given society is socially and psychologically determined”. The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development defines gender as “the socially defined/constructed differences between women and men that result in women’s subordination and inequality in opportunity for a better life”. Both definitions simply imply that sex is biological while gender is socially constructed.

As Sall (2000) explains, there is a significant relationship between the female sex and feminine gender, and the male sex and masculine gender. This is to mean that the biological distinction between female and male also affects the socially accepted roles and responsibilities. For instance, society often attaches caring and nurturance roles to women. Moreover, there are activities only women can perform, such as breastfeeding. For Kabeer (2013), gender equality means both equality of treatment under the law and equality of opportunity. However, she cautions that such definitions usually do not take structural inequality into account, but rather include substantive equality and equality of agency. Kabeer (2013), describes substantive equality as suggesting that “the different circumstances and characteristics of men and women have to be considered to avoid unfair gender-related outcomes”; while equality of agency means “ensuring that both women and men can make strategic life choices for themselves and help determine the conditions under which these choices are made”. In particular, in oral communications, gender equality and equity are often
used interchangeably. Some authors have attempted to accord distinct meanings to these terms. According to Gwirai (2010), Gender equality refers to sameness or uniformity in quantity, amount, value and intensity of provisions made and measures implemented for women and men. On the other hand, gender equity is doing whatever is necessary to ensure equality of outcomes in the life experiences of women and men. For Mamashela (2009), gender equity is an end product expressed as “attaining parity between women and men in the quality of life, academic, and work outcomes valued by our society without limitations associated with gender stereotypes, gender roles, or prejudices”. UNFPA (2008,) views gender equity as “an approach that aims to progressively redress severe gender gaps and disadvantages by taking specific affirmative measurements through programs, policies and projects”, Mulugeta (2007), further differentiated the two concepts. According to her, while equity is difficult to legislate, it is possible to legislate equality since it is possible to assess whether identical treatment criteria are met.On the occasion of 2005 Women’s Day, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was quoted as saying (UNDP, 2005,), “Sixty years have passed since the founders of the United Nations inscribed, on the first page of our Charter, the equal rights of women and men. Since then, study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”. Thus this study aims at exposing the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations.

Kabeer (2013), defines empowerment as a process “by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability”. In the gender equation, empowerment is required for women since they are the ones who have generally been deprived of opportunities to make choices in their lives. At birth children are essentially neutral and biological differences over insufficient to account for late male and female differences.
Biological differences between men and women are overlaid with cultural notions about differences and this becomes an important point of departure for the topic under study.

Cascule (2001); Ford (2002) concur that in thought and practice the ideology of gender is the basis for the evaluation of people, action and qualities, styles of behaviour, personality types, occupation, are all cultural expressions of gender. All people are evaluated and not just labelled for they stand in unequal opposition to one another, male is high, female is low. So as people strategically orient themselves towards people and tasks, they do so in terms of the existing ideologies.

In relation with the above Fletcher (2013), has it that the structured inequalities give rise to different unequal life experiences, which in turn differentially orient children and adults in their desires, their aspirations, abilities and achievements. Gender differences start from the moment of birth between males and females. Stroquist (2007), postulates that most parents provide environments for children that differ in important ways according to gender. For example, blue blankets are given to boys and pink ones to girls at birth. Also, girls and boys are given different kinds of toys (Guiso et al., 2009). Items in “Toys R Us”, the largest toy store chain in the United States of America, displayed toys according to gender (Glazer 2011). How parents interact with their children also tends to be dependent on their sex. For instance, fathers play more roughly with their sons than with their daughters. In addition, fathers frequently greet their children differently on the basis of their gender. Such differences in behaviour produce different socialisation experiences for males and females (Stratigaki, 2009). This study attempts to fill in the void by examining the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. In terms of the selection of toys for males and females which have a tag of being a boy by being given
car toys and being given a doll for being a girl, parents consciously or unconsciously reinforce gender stereotyping in children for being a boy or girl. This might be the reason why women continue to be underrepresented in student governance bodies.

As an extension of the above Fennema (2011), further explains that, from the time they are born, children are encouraged to behave in ways that are considered appropriately feminine or masculine throughout their life. According to Chaitya (2000), school peers, culture and society reinforce these values and norms. It is not just parents who socialise children but the society as a whole communicates clear messages to children as they grow up. Guiso, Monte, Sapienza and Angeles (2008), note that children’s reading books have traditionally portrayed girls in stereotypically nurturing roles, and boys in more physical and action-oriented roles. The education system also treats girls and boys differently. For example, in elementary schools, boys are five times more likely than girls to receive attention from classroom teachers (Mbani, 2005). Furthermore, boys are more likely to be praised for the intelligence of their work while girls are more likely to be commended for their neatness (Schaefer, 2004). The legal and regulatory environment further enhances and legitimises gender stereotyping through discriminatory laws and practices which are reinforced by authoritarian systems of governance.

Both scholars are agreeing in their condemnation of the education system practices. These are subtle practices which perpetuate gender inequality and are very effective but hidden. They impact upon self concepts by both boys and girls. The comments coming from a teacher, makes the pupils want to repeat the positive comment. This will then affect the female pupils who become good at aesthetic values which give the periphery in relation to the task. The boys are praised for the concept. This means that the girls are being marginalised. They are being located outside the curriculum. It becomes very problematic to correct in latter life
when their contributions are needed in a more crucial matter e.g. issues of leadership at tertiary institutions.

Clark (2010), contends that socialisation produces a gender schema. The gender schema is made on the basis of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for males and females; hence, children begin to behave in ways that reflect society’s gender roles. Guiso, Monte, Sapienza and Zangales (2008), suggest that one way to decrease the likelihood that children will develop gender schemas is to encourage children to be androgynous. Hence, gender differences are stereotypes which are socially constructed by the society. This study sought to make findings that would enlighten institutions on the best practices that do away with stereotyping, gender schema and gender roles, among others, so that boys and girls are brought up on the same platform that promotes learning, ability and skills based on potential so as to do away with the challenges of gender equity in student governance.

The research attempted to find out of the stereotypes described here which affect stakeholders’ perceptions of female leaders’ effectiveness. According to Tong (2009), “women lacked liberty and virtue because they were not allowed to participate in decision-making process.” Important to this study is the work of Maruzani, Matole and Chauraya (2012), who explain that, people tend to internalise the stereotypes as standards of behaviour and as such, do not go beyond the traditional roles or do not aspire for something more than stereotypes produce, self-fulfilling prophecy, for example, women are considered weak and as a result women’s “weakness” over the years has been turned into a desirable feminine trait and some women act according to this perception. On societal level, stereotypes are used as standards for evaluating categories of people in terms of their mental capabilities, social
roles, position and qualities possessed. When stereotypes are used, they lead to discrimination and prejudice, Lumumba (2006).

The views of Maruzani, Matole and Chauraya seem to be confirmed by the reality on the ground. Females do not aspire to be for feminie leadership. However, many feminists blame today’s social institutions which uphold traditional characterisation of women as weak and dependend upon men for their security, safety, pleasure, and survival. It is interesting to note that young girls and women are positively acknowledged when they uphold those long established traditions. This is because the females have the, ‘need to belong’. Females then tend to avoid radical positions so as to fit into these social institutions. Generally females feel the need to stretch their efforts to impress. They then tend to go out of their way to uphold what the society believes than being autonomous.

According Gwirai (2010), in the early society, women were not exposed to the outside world; they could do roles like housekeeping and care giving which restricted them to the home. Other activities include care and education for children, fuel and water collection, food processing (Stronquist, 2007; Whitehead 2004). Men usually have productive roles of producing goods and services for consumption or for sale on the market. Thus, according to Shaba (2000), women because of their reproductive work are confined more and more to the private spaces and hence are not seen participating in decision-making processes within the public arena.
2.5 Historical and Socio-Cultural Contexts for Women in Higher Education

In relation to the above, Deventer (2003), asserts that the traditional inequity between men and women may be traced throughout history where it has been clocked in male centred philosophers. This inequity is deeply embedded within societies and often emanates from the predominant religious thought in specific areas. These philosophers have attributed towards the traditional stereotyping of gender roles and also towards sex role socialisation; thereby affecting the relative position of women as opposed to men both in education and in society (Mbani, 2005; Chinyani, 2007 and Mulugeta, 2007). It is in the light of the above views that this research sought to explore the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies.

Mama (2001), asserts that on a global level available literature shows that although women constitute more than half the world’s population, their participation, as leaders, remains limited due to variety of reasons. In the first world; patriarchy, capitalism and industrialisation were considered the main factors leading to the marginalisation of women in public sphere. In the so called ‘third world’, the stereotyping of women to productive and reproductive roles in the house hold are considered directly responsible for the gender inequality in politics. For the third world, colonialism, cultural and traditional tendencies are viewed as the main causes of women’s marginalisation (Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango, 2009). According to some scholars such as Moss Racusin (2012), the system of American Higher Education was borrowed from the European University model, which was designed by and for men only. Religious men from different churches, for instance, established the first three colonial colleges for the purposes of training young men to be ministers, statesmen, and scholars. Although the first American Higher Education institution, Harvard College, was founded in 1636, women were excluded from state universities until 1855 (Sawyer, 2002). Therefore, the system of higher learning, from the governing board to the student body,
remained completely male for more than 200 years. As a result of this yearning for gender autonomy, concerns on student governance bodies became a central issue and subject to study.

Late entry of women into American colleges and universities was caused by opposition to women’s education as well as by widely held negative societal views about women’s intellectual capacity. In the 17th Century, women were perceived as intellectually inferior to men and as incapable of being educated. Rathberger (2003), for instance, noted that during colonial times, a common belief about a woman was that “Her faculties were not worth training. Her place was is in the home, where man had assigned her a number of useful functions”

Such statements reflected not only the American white male’s negative beliefs about women’s abilities and their absolute dominance over women, but also the patriarchal Western culture on which the nation was founded. Unlike their male counterparts, women were excluded from political, economic, and social activities and were limited to domestic responsibilities such as housekeeping, childrearing, sewing, and cooking (Chabaya, 2009 and Mbani, 2005).

During the 18th Century, more than 20 colleges were founded, but admissions to these colleges were restricted to men only (Moss Racusim, 2012). Although a few women were inspired by the European enlightenment and demanded higher education for women, their voices never received any attention. Consequently, some women reformers started a very small number of respectable schools and female academies similar to today’s high school (Glazer-Raymo, 2002; Nidiffer, 2003). The resistance against women’s higher education,
once again, had to do with the widely held belief system about where women belong and about womanhood in the American society. The socio-cultural norms required women to be submissive daughters, wives, and mothers. Giving them more education than needed was viewed not only as wrong but also as possibly offensive to men who loved “a learned scholar, but not a learned wife.” Since women could never become ministers, statesmen, physicians, or lawyers, college education for women in the colonial period was never considered (Nidiffer, 2001, 2003). Obviously, not only were women’s identities, worth, and social functions defined by men, but their access to education was also still under men’s control. Women’s education did not receive much attention until the quality of men’s lives was affected.

Early in the 19th Century men recognised the need for more educated women who knew how to assist their fathers’ or husbands’ material advancement, handle the housework, and educate their children; at that point, women’s illiteracy became a problem (Deventer, 2003). As a result, common schools were opened to women in the 1820s so that the illiteracy gap between men and women could be reduced and so that women could become better wives, homemakers, and mothers. The beginning stage of women’s education, surprisingly, was restricted to basic literacy that is 3 Rs, training and domestic studies that prepared women for marriage and motherhood.

The history of women in higher education has a sordid past. With the formation of the United States in the 18th Century, settlers came to America seeking religious freedom and tolerance. This freedom allowed early Americans to practice their Judeo-Christian ways which ultimately created a barrier for women in higher education (Nidiffer, 2003). Within this Christian context, women were called to be subservient to their husbands, defining their roles
at home with the family while the men engaged society through politics and economic development (Nidiffer, 2003). Questioning the intellectual prowess of women, they stayed at home tending to the family (Rudolf, 1990). Women were also excluded from education due to the fear that it may impact their fertility and their ability to procreate (Nidiffer, 2003).

Throughout the 19th Century, women made gains through entrance into universities and colleges, allowing for greater access to professional education (Rudolph, 1990). While institutions first started going co-educational in the 1830’s and 1840’s, women faced chilly, barrier laden climates on campus (Nidiffer, 2003). “Women rarely became senior administrators except when charged with the responsibility of caring for women students in roles such as physical educators, doctors or deans of women” (Nidiffer, 2003, p. 21). The rise of women’s colleges, however, allowed for the increase in female administrators in higher education, including university presidents, the only place where women rose to power before the 1950’s (Nidiffer, 2003). As institutions went co-educational, men worried about the health of female students, therefore, creating a need to access the gym separately from the men (Nidiffer, 2003). In addition to providing exercise, these educators served as disciplinarians as well as cared for students’ grooming (Nidiffer, 2003).

The first Lady Principal of the Female Department, a female administrator at Oberlin, a co-educational college, was Mrs. Marianne Parker Dascom (Nidiffer, 2000). Marion Talbot of the University of Chicago was a dean of women who first organised a professional deans meeting in 1903, which continued biennially (Nidiffer, 2000). During this time, there was an acknowledgement that there needed to be a professional organisation for female administrators in higher education. Therefore, in 1915, Kathryn Sisson McLean of State Teachers College in Chadron, Nebraska, started informal discussions with deans of women
and the following year created the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW) which met during the National Education Association’s (NEA) annual meeting (Nidiffer, 2003). The organisation underwent several changes in membership as it attempted to integrate non-majority women into its membership but eventually closed as an organisation in 1999. The members found better professional fits in other organisations such as, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) (Nidiffer, 2003). The professionalism of deans of women have progressed and have been incorporated into other national professional development programmes, such as NASPA’s Alice B. Manicur Symposium for women aspiring to the presidency or vice presidency and the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) Institute (Allan, 2011). These efforts continue to be vital, as the numbers of women advancing are met with mixed reviews. In 1997, women held 27.3% of the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) role at doctoral institutions and 40.5% of the SSAO roles at baccalaureate institutions (Hoffman, 2011). Currently those numbers are 38.5% at both doctoral and baccalaureate institutions (Hoffman, 2011).

2.6 Female Career Advancement

Built off the foundation laid by pioneering deans of women, the presence of women in higher education blossomed. And since that time, career advancement has been discussed in the literature for women administrators in higher education (Tibatemwa, 2010). Topics often include networking, mentoring, negotiating salaries, and so forth. Additionally, there is emerging literature regarding women who attempt to overcome the career barrier opposite of the glass ceiling, but rather the “sticky floor” to which clerical staff seek to advance to administrative positions (Iverson, 2009).
Women’s career advancement is often linked to individual issues/skills, organisation efforts (such as, training) and interpersonal skills (Iverson, 2009). Individual skills and issues often relate to a woman’s skills related to job performance. But it also includes issues such as, motivation, ambition and family desires (Iverson, 2009). Instead of just a glass ceiling or a labyrinth being a barrier to advancement, organisational structures can oppress women in careers (Iverson, 2009). Organisations that utilise masculine hierarchical structures innately favour one gender over another (Iverson, 2009). Interpersonal factors include women who have supportive supervisors as well as mentors (Iverson, 2009).

The American female at that time “was recognised as capable of being educated—up to point” (Whitehead 2004). College education was the point where women were still resisted because “there did not seem to be any compelling reasons why young women needed any more Greek, Latin, and Mathematics than they learned in the academy” (Tong, 2009).

A decade later, the idea of women’s higher education was finally, but grudgingly, accepted by male educators because of the great need for more educated women to teach at common schools and to serve as missionaries while men were pursuing increased business opportunities (Chliwnik, 1997; Nidiffer, 2003). Through a small number of all-female academies, seminaries, and colleges, more women were able to engage in higher education (Chliwniak, 1997; Nidiffer, 2003; 2004). For the first time, American women had the opportunity to expand slightly their cultural boundaries as well as their social contracts although marriage was still considered as women’s “real profession” (Mataruse, 2011). Attitudes toward women in the academy, likewise, remained relatively unchanged.
The general public, including male college professors, still believed that women were not only physically but also intellectually inferior to men and that they did not have the mental capacity to do college work (Nidiffer, 2001a). Nidiffer recorded that “These sex differences in mind were said to be an insuperable barrier, against which no propaganda for the equality of women could be effective” (p. 154). In 1837, Oberlin College in Ohio first tested co-education by enrolling four female freshmen (Nidiffer, 2002), but women did not gain access to public universities and private universities until 1855 and 1872, respectively (Chliwniak, 1997). Lorber (2005) commented that even after women entered college campuses, their roles and participation were sanctioned by socio-cultural norms that limited them to acceptable roles and chores. According to Glazer-Raymo (2002), “Sex roles were maintained at Oberlin, and as young men earned their education by doing unpaid farm labour, their female classmates provided them with unpaid housekeeping.” By the 1860s, more than 40 institutions provided college education to women (Sawyer, 2002). The Morrill Act of 1862 boosted the founding of land-grant state colleges and universities and, consequently, expanded women’s access to coeducational institutions.

The “Seven Sisters” colleges that offered rigorous college training were established during the 1870s (Nidiffer, 2004) as well. Johns Hopkins, the first American Research University with a graduate school, was founded in 1876 but was designated for men only (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). By the 1880s, more than 30% of American colleges had opened their doors to women and female normal schools were created because some institutions continued to deny admission to women (Sawyer, 2002). With the increase of women in the academy within the public and private sectors, women’s higher learning suffered from unprecedented religious, intellectual, and social attacks. Male scholars from different disciplines argued against the idea of higher education for women based on various negative theories and views, such as, women’s biological differences, their physical and intellectual limitations, their less
developed brains, and their gender-prescribed social functions (Nidiffer 2002). Opponents of women’s education implied that rigorous intellectual training would make women unsuitable for marriage, trigger women’s infertility, unfeminine women distract men in the academy, and produce domestic problems such as, the threat of having a strong minded or an intelligent wife (Nidiffer, 2002). Between the 1890s and World War I, women made gains in admission to undergraduate programmes, and they reduced men’s resistance to women’s involvement in graduate studies. After 1890, the doors to doctoral programmes were reluctantly opened to women (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). Pioneer women faculty members, unfortunately, were not taken seriously, and they found it hard to gain social as well as intellectual acceptance, not to mention the opportunity to teach in coeducational universities (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). Hence, women faculties were found either in women’s colleges or normal schools.

By 1900, 60% of colleges had women as undergraduate students on their campuses. Ten years later, women represented 47% of the student body and 26% of the faculty of American colleges and universities (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). With the increase of women in both single-sex and coeducational institutions, women administrators became more widely accepted. Although most of the first women presidents and academic deans were hired in women’s colleges, the position of dean of women was created in coeducational universities to meet women students’ needs (Glazer-Raymo, 2002; Nidiffer, 2001). A big gap continued to exist between men’s and women’s educational experiences in the early 20th Century as well. Very few women had the option of attending coeducational universities, which were considered superior to women’s colleges (Geiger,). Besides, while male students could choose to major in a variety of fields ranging from political science to economics, law, divinity, and medicine, most female students were funneled into “women’s” fields such as, teacher education, home economics, and social work (Nidiffer, 2003).
One newly developed stereotype during the early 20th Century was that “women were incapable of learning science and were skilled only in the humanities, languages, and possibly applied social sciences” (Nidiffer, 2003, p. 17). In addition, whenever an area of study was “feminised,” its value dropped. Meanwhile, although women seemed to be capable of handling the strain of serious study, opponents of women’s higher education did not stop searching for reasons to limit women’s access to higher education. They claimed that a college education for women was causing great harm to American society and to college men because fewer college women were married (Kearney, 2000). Even if they did marry, many had fewer children, and their divorce rate was higher than those without higher education. Opponents proclaimed that to allow women not to reproduce offspring was simply “race suicide” (Nidiffer, 2002, 2003). Moreover, they also accused coeducation of “feminizing both male students and the institutions themselves” (Nidiffer, 2002, p. 9).

The disparity between women and men’s experiences in the academy was not bridged until the 1930s and 1940s when women filled the space left by white men who had gone to the battlefields during World Wars I and II (Geiger, 2004; Glazer-Raymo, 2002). In fact, women’s higher education reached its first golden age during this period, with women representing more than 40% of the undergraduate study body (Nidiffer, 2001a). However, women experienced setbacks by the 1950s because returning veterans were given priority for higher education (Chliwniak, 1997; Glazer-Raymo 2002), demonstrating again that American society still valued men’s education more than women’s. The position of dean of women also started to fade out during the 1950s and 1960s as the dean of men’s and dean of women’s positions were combined. Surprisingly, while women deans were fired or relocated, their
male counterparts were promoted to the newly created position of chief student affairs officer (Glazer-Raymo, 2002).

Although anti-discrimination laws and regulations safeguarded women’s access to higher education, these laws were neither enforced nor expanded to fight against employment discrimination in academe until 1970 “when Bernice R. Sandler of the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL) filed the first charges of sex discrimination in academy, initiating. WEAL’s campaign to spur the federal government to enforce the Executive Order against colleges and universities” (Women did not regain their stride until the 1970s and 1980s when they gradually began to outnumber men as undergraduate and graduate students (Nidiffer, 2001a; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Women also made significant gains as faculty, staff, and administrators during this period (Glazer-Raymo, 2002).

As the major clientele of American Higher Education, women today can be found in every aspect and discipline of higher education as students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Since the 1980s, women have become the majority recipients of bachelor’s and master’s degrees. In 2001-02, 46% of all doctorates were received by women (U.S. Department of Education, 2004); and the National Organization for Research at the University of Chicago (2001) predicted that it will not take long for women to become the majority of doctoral recipients as well. While little doubt exists that academic women’s status at the dawn of the 21st Century is much better than 200 years ago, women have not reached parity in higher education yet (Nidiffer, 2002). In the same way, women faculty, staff, and administrators continue to have different experiences at work and lag behind their male counterparts in terms of status, positions, salaries, and recognition. Statistics show that women are still segregated at the lower levels of the occupational hierarchy. The U.S. Department of Education (2002), for
instance, reported that as of the fall of 1999, women occupied 54% of the lecturer positions but represented only 21% of the full professors. The percentage of female tenured full-time professors increased slightly to 22% in the fall of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b). In addition, “In general, men earned higher average salaries than women regardless of contract length or rank” (p. 3).

Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009), asserts that, in most cases a woman has been looked upon as an inferior being. She has been given secondary status both in the family and the society. The study attempted to assess the effectiveness of the few women who are in positions of educational leadership. Ford (2002), observed that many men have found it advantageous to exclude women from the labour market and public life. Discrimination was not limited to male chauvinist but it has been openly displayed and defended on religious and falsely on biological grounds. It became institutionalised through laws and regulations. Mudiwa (2010), has it that Christians believe that women were created to be helpers of men and that man was not created for woman but the woman for the man hence put the woman into permanent subservience of the man. A number of religious women even oppose the idea of women’s emancipation and see their role in religion as giving support to men’s role of leadership in religion. Thus Chikwanha (2009), comments that, generally speaking, women are the most oppressed humiliated and exploited beings in society. A woman is even exploited by a man who is himself exploited. This study, therefore, attempts to fill in this void by examining the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.

The issue of women and gender related issues has been the subject of research for several decades and considerable literature is available on it. According to Mahuku (2002), society is
characterised by fundamental inequalities between men and women. Women who form the majority are marginalised in the education system, politics, economy, and various other areas where decisions that affect them are made. However, Githua (2014), argues that it would be denying a biological truth to assume that men and women do not have differentiating roles. The trouble, however, is that these different roles are almost imperceptibly transformed into a hierarchy of superior and subordinate relationships. It is through this research that female students have to appreciate that gender equality is not a hierarchy of superior and subordinate relationships but equal opportunities. This study attempted to establish the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies. According to Sign and Medury (2003), in the last few decades, there is simple evidence that a number of women in various age groups, from different castes and communities, both in rural and urban areas, have become more involved in public affairs. Some of them have stepped out due to economic necessity. Others have started to work due to the impact of education and this made the research that seeks to interrogate the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies a more interesting and relevant venture.

2.7 Gender and Globalisation

According to Giddens (2004) feminism is not merely an academic exercise nor is it restricted to North America and Western Europe. The women’s movement is a dynamic international phenomenon that targets both long standing gender inequalities and the new challenges facing women in global age. Giddens (2004), further gives examples that in China, women are working to secure equal rights in employment and equal participation in politics. In South Africa, women played a vital role in the battle against apartheid era to improve people’s access to education, health facilities, housing and jobs. In Peru, activists have been working for decades to increase women’s role in the public sphere. On a global sphere, the United Nations conference on women, held conferences to discuss on gender and women (Giddens,
2004). One of the conferences was held in Beijing, China in 1995. Delegates from 181 nations were in attendance, seeking ways to ensure “women’s equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, market, vocational training. Participants spent ten days listening to presentations on the state of women worldwide debating ways to improve their conditions and building professional and personal ties to one another (Tamalo 2002). Gender issues are not confined to one region, country or place. Gillham (2012) in Hendriks, Mouton, Hansen and Roux (2012, p. 94) notes, "...one of the first things we must come to terms with is that what we have here is a local expression of a global problem. In that sense we are speaking of a global rather than a distinctly African problem."

Women’s experiences differ depending on the country they live in, their history, culture and religion. Lorber (2005), notes that in contemporary society, men and women may, on the surface, seem to enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. However, it is important to understand how values and practices embedded in particular domains and social institutions foster inequality. Various studies have shown that culture impacts very negatively on gender equality in leadership.

Yoder (2001), notes that the position of women in higher education management cannot be treated in isolation from the general status of women in society, and from the generalism of economic and social development. In a research she carried out, Yoder (2001), shows that women held less than fifty percent of academic and administrative posts in higher education institutions. They were most represented in lower level academic and middle management positions and their participation relative to men decreases at higher levels. The research shows that representation varies between about ten and twenty percent at middle management
level and from nothing to ten percent at senior management level. Yoder’s perspective shows that the higher the ladder of positions in society the fewer women become involved.

Representation in the committee system follows a similar pattern with women more likely to be members of departmental and faculty committees than on governing boards or councils. A consequence of this pattern of decreasing representation at successively higher levels is that senior women frequently find themselves isolated in hierarchies which are predominantly male. Yoder (2001)’s research shows that gender based inequalities in education management were derived from cultural perceptions of women’s role which not only pervade higher education institutions at the systemic level, but inform the attitudes and behaviours of individual men and women. They are reinforced in the family and in the education system, incurricular materials, through the media and in the workplace. This research, therefore, sought to bridge the gap that women’s interests are not essentially the same throughout the world, therefore in this research of challenges of gender equity in Zimbabwean tertiary institutes, the information gathered will be Zimbabwe oriented.

Important to this study is the work of Ohrio (2002), who posits that, the world needs to learn from the past mistakes of imposing strategies and policies on poor economies. The developing world is far more diverse than those responsible for development strategies seem to believe. Therefore, projects should be designed to suit prevailing circumstances. In this study having a critical analysis of the challenges faced by female students in governance of student bodies will expose findings directly influencing gender in Zimbabwe tertiary institutions.

Mama (2001), established that, HE institutions continue to be key sites for production of intellectual capacity that is both socially responsible and relevant to regional development
goals. The agenda of gender equality should also be included within this prerequisite of capacities. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are by and large obligated to honour the existing national, regional and international policy commitments for gender equality that their governments have signed. This study in Zimbabwe may be a fulfilment of Mama’s view that local commitments to gender equity require first the nations to take up steps to ensure that they are not themselves reproducing the problem of gender inequality and injustice when their own institutions, systems, policies and procedure. Thus, the next paragraph will look at women empowering.

2.8 Empowering Women

Women empowerment means, the attempts by poor and powerless, or those whose interests are not represented in the state or whose demands are not met by the state policies. To meet their needs they either go through their own organisation or through pressure on the state. The pressure is to make the state act in their interest (Sawyer, 2002). Women empowerment in Thomas (2009), involves gaining a voice, having mobility and establishing a public presence. In relation to this study of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, women can empower themselves by obtaining control over different aspects of their daily lives. Empowerment also suggests that they need to gain some control over power structures. The issues that women organise around may arise from their immediate needs and concerns or from more fundamental problems of gender relations. Related to this study is the work of Lorber (2005), who separates practical and strategic gender interests as follows: practical gender interests arise from women’s positions in sexual division of labour, for example, their interest as mothers, rural labourers and domestic servants. They arise from a desire to challenge women’s subordination and existing gender relations. It is the mission of this research to work towards that goal.
Moss Racusin (2012), uses these categories to analyse the needs which women organise into practical and strategic gender needs. The practical gender needs might include, wages and health care programmes for women among others. Whereas strategic gender needs might include changes in divorce laws to give women equality with men or affirmative action to give women political representation. Empowerment has the following elements:

- It involves moving from individual to collective action.

- It involves an increase in capabilities, for example, being able to understand and articulate needs and interests.

Empowerment also involves challenging existing structures including class structure and social relations at many levels: in households, community, places of employment and in relation to the state Sawyer (2004).

Women’s empowerment is a process. The process of engaging in public action is also empowering because women begin to recognise their capacity to bring about change. Empowerment in Jein (1990, p. 14) involves self-discovery, a change in personal consciousness as well as the development of collective identity with other women. As an extension of the above, (Mulugeta, 2007) has it that, empowerment may be quite gradual. It may involve many kinds of enabling processes as well as the achievement of particular goals. Enabling processes may include confidence building and skills development as related to this study of female participation in student governance bodies. Empowerment may entail the changing of structures rather than making gender needs and interest fit into existing ones. From Whitehead (2004), these ideas fuelled the researcher to probe the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies. The researcher now turns to the protocols that promote the participation of women in governance.
2.9 Protocols that Promote the Participation of Women in Governance

In relation to the above, this paragraph discusses protocols that promote participation. The participation of women in government has been an issue of debate among many international and national organisations. Kabeer (2013), posits that this has led to the initiation and formulation of conventions and protocols that seek to promote the participation of women in influential decision-making positions. The Zimbabwean government ratified the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Security Council Resolution, (UNSCR) 1325 and the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)(Mama, 2001). This is a big step towards gender equality hence this study will seek to unveil steps to be done by government to ensure gender equality is SGB.

Zimbabwe is also a signatory to regional protocols that are in accordance with the international conventions aimed at promoting gender equality in the African region (Mawere, 2006). These include the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights of Women in Africa, the African Union (AU) Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, as well as the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. Mamashela (2009), argues that the objective of these protocols is to increase the participation of women in national governance structures in the African Region.

According to Chikwanha (1992), The Zimbabwean Government also went on to formulate local policies on women’s empowerment after noticing the gaps in women’s participation. Affirmative Action Policy was introduced into the educational system in the 1990s. The
policy was meant to lower the admission points required for the admission of girls while that of boys remained high (Gaidzanwa, 2001). Following that, the National Gender Policy (NGP) of Zimbabwe was implemented in 2004. The policy is meant to increase women’s participation in all organisational bodies in Zimbabwe. Thus a further probe into the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies will lead to formulation of other policies.

Quotas are also being implemented as the tools for promoting women’s participation in politics. The different types of quotas that can be used are those mandated by a constitution, legislation or voluntary on the part of political parties (Ford, 2002). According to the SADC Gender Protocol Barometer (2010) the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) adopted the 30% quota while the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) adopted the 50% quota in 2009. Nevertheless, the representation of women in the Zimbabwean parliament still stands at 18% which is far from that mandated by the quotas (SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2010). It follows that on paper both parties, the desire to mitigate these gender imbalances in disseminated. These key political stakeholders both recognise the problem of gender imbalance and they do not explain it away, rather they intervene to try and challenge status quo and the problem of gender inequity in politics. Therefore this study aims to feel the gap of this political egalitarianism into Tertiary education. What is true is not made true because an authority has said so. No, that is the fallacy of “appealing to authority” or to our sense of shame. A statement is only true because there is a real entity in the world corresponding to it. The truth for the research is what correspondence to the proposition on the ground which is female student leadership in S.R.C which stands to be investigated.
Zimbabwe also approved youth protocols that seek to promote the participation of young women. These include the African Youth Charter and the National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe. The African Union (AU) (2006), indicates that the African Youth Charter seeks to eradicate discrimination against girls and young women as has been stipulated by the various international and regional human rights conventions. Article 23a of the African Youth Charter proposes the need to introduce legislative measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and young women in Africa (African Union, 2006). The National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe (2010), notes that female students are mainly enrolled in sectors such as nursing and teaching and that there is need to “Promote gender equality and equity among youths in education and training, socio-cultural, political, economic and legal spheres” (Zimbabwe National Youth Policy 2010, p. 67). The policy cites the need to eradicate factors that fight the attainment of equal opportunities in tertiary institutions. The adoption of National Youth Policy and the African Youth Charter clearly reflect how the Zimbabwean government is committed to the promotion of gender equality equity among the youths. However, it is surprising to note that despite the adoption of these protocols, women’s participation in governance organisations is still insignificant as compared to that of males.

2.10 Levels of Female Participation

Ford (2002), defined participation as, the means through which people use in expressing their economic, social or political concerns. In support to that, Connor (2007), identifies participation as the mechanisms used by the public to express their opinions or influence decisions made regarding their social, political or economic wellbeing within an institution. To outline clearly how female students are engaged in students’ governance three levels of participation were applied by Awoniyi (2003). The first level of participation entails occupying influential positions in a governance organisation in which one plays a role in decision-making processes. Level two, is whereby people have the same involvement in an
organisation or community but other people make important decisions and inform members about new policies or what action to take. The third level is when members of an organisation or community have no say or influence on how the organisation operates. The members are expected to accept decisions made by others and are powerless to make changes for themselves.

Different from that, Fung, in Hadzizi (2006), says participation can be judged through questions such as, “Who is allowed to participate”, “Are they representative of the population”, “What is the method of communication or decision-making used” and “What is their level of involvement in participation?”. Female students’ level of participation in student governance fall under one of Arnestein's three levels of participation or offer answers to Fung’s questions. Thus in this research, there will be analysis of these questions in a bid to probe the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary institutions.

2.11 Why Female Students should Participate in Students’ Governance
As an extension of the above, the researcher then discussed the reasons for female participation in student governing bodies. Diverse skills and abilities are acquired in tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions consist of polytechnics, teacher training colleges; vocational skills training centres and universities. Yoder (2001), says participation in tertiary institutions promotes democratic values some of them being transparency, rule of law, consensus, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Mudiwa (2010), argues that democratic behaviour is most likely to occur when students have acquired certain knowledge, understanding and beliefs. Democratic behaviour is revealed through female students’ understanding of how a democratic government is supposed to function and also through their ability to appreciate personal responsibilities in students’ governance. Female students’
commitment to student governance can also be witnessed in their willingness to be active participants (Kearney, 2000).

Furthermore, tertiary institutions shape the characteristics of students as they prepare to go into the world of employment. It is, however, sad to note that the educational environment is designed to ensure patriarchal consciousness (Serere, 2004; Zimbabwe National Youth Policy, 2010). In agreement to these assertions, FAWE (2002), points out that a cursory glance at the gender ratios of students and academic staff in African institutions reveals an imbalance that favours men against women. Therefore, it is important to change the way boys and schools’ staff members view females to improve their status in the society. Kearney (2000) agrees that the inclusion of female students in major decision-making processes will improve their involvement in decision-making in the future. In addition, through active participation, female students will be in better positions to earn a living in the future (Gaidzanwa, 1992; Mama, 2008).

On a different note, scholars have agreed that female students’ involvement in decision-making helps them in exchanging intellectual ideas which are needed in the development era we are in (Serere, 2004; Mama, 2008). Furthermore, female students should be involved in decision-making processes because they have direct knowledge concerning issues that affect their welfare on or out of campus (Xaba, 2011). Awoniyi (2003), maintains that female students’ involvement in the decision-making processes improves the level of acceptance of the decisions which are made in their institutions as compared to imposing decisions they are unaware of. This is also supported by the Shared Governance theory which promotes equal participation in the running of tertiary institutions. Hadzizi (2006), declares that administration members should ensure that before a final decision is made, both male and
female students would have had the opportunity to challenge openly the feasibility of the
decision to be made. Having looked at reasons to participate, the next section looks at the
factors that hinder female students’ participation in student governing bodies.

2.12 Factors that Hinder or Promote Female Students’ Participation

This segment will look into the factors that hinder or promote female students’ participation
in student governing bodies.

2.12.1 Negative perceptions

Negative perceptions deter female students from participating in student governance
structures. Young (2004), in the study regarding female students’ participation in student
governance in American tertiary institutions found out that the young women who were in
leadership believed that they required a lot of effort for them stay there. In disagreement to
this assertion, Kearney (2000), proposes that if women conform to their feminine qualities
they will not be able to attain the characteristics required for one to be a leader. Confidence
also lacks, there is no doubting the fact that women in the workplace are as competent and
hard-working as men. Indeed, in early life, females are way ahead of their male counterparts
and in school they manage to outpace men (Carter & Silva, 2010). But in later life women
fail to keep up and in large numbers fall off pace. During the elementary years of schooling
young girls are very articulate and more active than boys. This behaviourial trend is explained
by the functionality of both nature and nurture. There is increasing evidence that an
individual’s confidence level is influenced by genetic. Kearney (2000), further explains that
the expression of leadership abilities is difficult for female students to attain because in
instances when they exhibit these qualities, the society interprets it as being uncultured. Sall
(2000), argues that participation in student governance entails a situation whereby, women must either become like men or become invisible.

Administration members also have the negative perception regarding female students’ participation. Gaidzanwa (1992), established that at the University of Zimbabwe the SRC was perceived as focused on “causing trouble, disharmony and sleepless nights for university authorities”. As a result, the university authorities hindered the natural succession of the SRC members through holding back logistical and moral support for the students’ elections. Female students found it necessary to stay out of trouble with members of administration (Gaidzanwa, 1992). Therefore this study of gender equity will enlighten the females on the advantages of participating in SGB. This further fuelled the researcher to embark on this research particularly focusing on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies.

2.12.2 Lack of support for elected female students

The other reason for female students’ absence in student governance was that women in elected or appointed positions were often isolated from the rest of the communities. Sweetman (2000), explains that women who join political parties, even those with a background in civil society and or a significant female constituency become isolated. Because they do not suit to the societal norms other females do not want to be associated with such. Furthermore, women leaders who would have acquired posts in a governance organisation are expected to be perfect and any failure by one female leader is attributed to other women. In support of that, Gaidzanwa (1993), says the first SRC female Secretary General at the University of Zimbabwe had to resign because of intimidation by male students and also because female students did not support her. This makes this research that seeks to
interrogate the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies a more interesting and relevant venture.

2.12.3 Cultural beliefs

Chikwanha, cited in Chimanikire (2009), argues that “student activism” is largely regarded as a male students’ domain. Due to the fact that, women have been socialised to believe that leadership is for men, they prefer participating in informal community based activities. In this same vein, some scholars agree that due to the African culture, e.g. funerals when women dress the body. It is common that male students resort to violence to get their opinions across; female students shun participating for fear of being harassed (Gaidzanwa, 1993; Sweetman, 2000; Sall, 2000). They way they socialised pamatare they fight to win issues for example, kingship was fought for and people even died. Gaidzanwa (1993), in her analysis of class, gender and cultural issues in student politics at the University of Zimbabwe, found out that male students’ violence and cultural beliefs resulted in a few females participating in the SRC. In this same line of thought, Sweetman (2000), says traditional attitudes towards female leadership lead women to prefer supporting male to female candidates. Sweetman (2000), explains that gender discrimination begins at home and later at school through the roles and duties girls are prescribed to perform. As a result, girls grow with the perception that men should be the household and community leaders whereas wives should play the subordinate, supportive and domestic roles (Longwe in Sweetman, 2000). It is still happening because parents and guardians are still not exposed. Even the teacher can perpetuate gender by making girls sweep.

Arguing from authority, there is scholarly value concensus on the fact that gender discrimination begins at early age. The New Maxists further explains that once gender stereotype starts in the first institution, the family in the formative stages of child
development the print on the child’s mind become long lasting, endurant and protracted. It continues through life and can be further perpetuated later in life through various other institutions such as friendships, the school and community. However policies and regulations at various social levels e.g. Family School, community and nation can mitigate the perpetuation and at times even roll it back.

Families also play a part in disregarding women’s potential in politics. In most families, women are told not to be involved in politics because it is regarded as a disgrace to the family (Moss Racusin 2012). Female students are urged to play their roles as good and respectful women by staying at home looking after the family (Sweetman, 2000; Gaidzanwa, 1993). Sall (2000), conclude that because of socialisation young women themselves believe that politics is a male reserve, dirty, unethical and unfeminine. This study will, therefore, seek to understand whether cultural beliefs also explain the nature of female students’ participation in positions of influence in tertiary institutions in Harare Province.

2.12.4 Social status of students

Gaidzanwa (1993), in her study on class, gender and cultural issues in student politics at the University of Zimbabwe found out that, middle class students who would have attended Group A schools and had access to fashionable clothing and resources felt they could not participate in student politics. Group A schools were government or privately owned where English was the only accepted medium of communication. The students who used (Shona) their mother language in secondary schools or with friends, were the ones expected to participate in students’ politics. These students were usually called “Hooligans” or "Strong Rural Background” (SRB) people meaning children of peasant farmers. On the other hand, high class female students preferred participating in clubs where they were free to express themselves with confidence and at the same time pursue their academic and personal interests.
(Gaidzanwa, 1993; Chikwanha, 2009). Thus this study is imperative for it seeks to interrogate the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies. Having looked at the social status of students, it is also important to look at discrimination and sexual harassment.

2.12.5 Discrimination and sexual harassment

Gaidzanwa (2001), carried out a study at the University of Zimbabwe and the research findings revealed that female lecturers and female students were discriminated against and this hampered their career progress. In another study, Gaidzanwa (2001), established that young female academics were usually harassed by both colleagues and lecturers whereas older female lecturers were harassed by older male colleagues. This supports Morgan’s (2005) assertion that men have been seen as both agents and holders of class power due to their dominant positions vis-à-vis property occupation.

In another study, Chikwanha in ChimaniKire (2009), found out that between the years 2002 and 2003 only 4 female students participated in the SRC in Afrikaans universities in South Africa. The study also established that 20 female students at the University of Potchefstroom (now North Western) had participated in the SRC. The differences were because the South African Students Congress (SASCO), had not implemented the African National Congress (ANC) resolution that 30% of the members in the SRC were supposed to be female. SASCO is the National Student Union for all the universities in South Africa. This research finding indicates the importance of implementing bylaws that seek to promote women’s participation in student governance. This is evidenced by the fact that women representation in parliament in countries such as, South Africa, Mozambique and Rwanda improved due to their implementation of protocols and quotas that aim at equal participation (Kasante, 2002).
In her study on student politics Fokwang in Chimanikire (2009), found out that in the years 2002 and 2003, very few female students participated in student governance at the University of Cameroon. The study further established that only male students participated in the Faculty Association, a form of student organisation that linked closely to other forms of student political organisations. However, the Faculty Associations’ powers were limited to faculty affairs only, thus it could not influence the whole institution. This was because the former student governance body had once led a strike which was of great magnitude thus threatened members of the administration authority. Nonetheless, female students did not participate due to the perception that the Faculty Association was a male domain. Furthermore, Fokwang (2003), explains that one of the few female candidates was reported to have dropped from the electoral contest due to the intimidation of female contestants by male students. As a result, only one female student from the Faculty of Arts acquired a position of the President of the Faculty Association.

Apart from that, Chikwanha in Chimanikire (2009), carried out a qualitative study at Africa University and the University of Zimbabwe. Chikwanha’s data gathering tools used were, semi-structured interviews. The variables used in the study included frequency of student participation in demonstrations, strikes, student meetings, students’ union politics, voluntary service activities, voting in student union elections or in national elections. The study found out that a few female students participated in students’ politics. The scholar shares that female students at the University of Zimbabwe and Africa University complained they could not participate in student governance because male students were usually violent against them. This confirms Kearney’s (2000) assertion that, the participation of women in politics depends on the education and empowerment of women practiced. Despite these inequalities in terms of female students’ participation in student governance, Makerere University in
Uganda is one institution that sought to improve women’s participation in decision-making positions. The Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) (2002), cites that, Makerere University was successful in mainstreaming gender through Affirmative Action, the Makerere Gender Policy and the Policy and Regulation on Sexual Harassment. In addition, the institution restructured and reviewed its Human Resource Manual Policy on recruitment and promotion. The other measures used at Makerere University included the offer of female scholarships and the engendering of the institutions' curriculum. In its efforts the institution witnessed improved enrolment and participation of women in major decision-making positions (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 2010).

Kasante (2001), in his research explained that, the enrolment of female students increased from 25% in 1990 to 43% in 2003. It also further increased from 45% in 2007 to 46% in 2008. Furthermore, in the academic years 2009 and 2010, 50, 4% of students who graduated were women. The gender mainstreaming activities at Makerere University were also applied to twenty-four tertiary institutions in Africa namely University of Ghana in Ghana, Badan University in Nigeria, Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, University of Dar within tertiary institutions. Tong (2009), agrees that educational parity will result in equality within societies.

The above reviewed studies clearly show that very few female students participated in student governance organisations, thus confirming the Liberal Feminist assertion that the society has a belief that women’s main roles are household work and childcare only (Hadzizi, 2006). However, because women and men were created equal, they should receive equal participation opportunities. From these studies it is also clear that the theme of non-
participation of female students in student governance structures is a major concern among scholars.

2.13 Leadership

Shaba (2000:54), asserts that, leadership is the ability to motivate, manage, organise, plan and control. Bennis, in Tong (2000), defines leadership in form of role. To him the first job of a leader is to define a vision for the organisation. According to John Queens Adams the 6th US President (1927) in Clarke (1986), “if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and became more; you are a leader”. Harry Truman (1884 – 1972) President of USA proclaimed that “my definition of a leader is a man who can persuade people to do what they do not want to do. Or do what they are too lazy to do and like it”. Kasante (2002), commends that, the feminine leadership style, emphasises co-operation over competition, intuition as well as rational thinking in problem solving, team structures where power and influence are shared with the group.

Historically, leadership was considered masculine, that is, the belief that men make better leaders than woman. Sweetman (2000), indicates that the idea is still common today. Although the number of female leaders has increased, they might not be given much value as compared to their male counterparts. Such thinking may lead to people having difficulty in accepting women as leaders in the workplace.

In student’s affairs, leadership is a critical aspect. Gaidzanwa (1993), comments that leadership is a critical element in an organisation because it is concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organised human and material resources within a college system.
For a college to run smoothly, it needs an effective leadership. Mudiwa (2010), concludes that effective leadership is a product of many aspects consisting of a clear vision, directional goals and planning efforts. Therefore, in relation to this study, an effective SRC has many roles which include, directing, guiding, developing and correcting, among others. An effective SRC leader shares decision-making with group members (Chikwanha, 2009).

From the above researches, Stoner (2005), concludes that, an effective college can be achieved through SRC skills of planning, leading and controlling. Holmes (2003), observes that most researches carried out seem to attribute an effective leader to masculine character. Some of the desirable qualities to possess, whether male or female, are a lofty sense of duty, broad sympathy and power of insight into character.

The leader’s role is changing from time to time according to the changing times. Today’s students want to be led and not managed. The traditional role of the leader is that of being the boss. Research by Shaba (2000), has it that leadership is about acceptable influence, usually persuasion, which depends on knowledge and expertise. As a leader, one has to have a high degree of competence and demonstrate, understanding of everyone else’s job in the organisation. Thus the females who have the leadership skills are encouraged to take up the leadership posts in student governing bodies.

2.14 Qualities of Women Leaders

Sign and Medury (2003), found out that women leaders are more assertive and persuasive; they have a stronger will to get things done and more willing to take risks than men leaders. This is in agreement with Chinyani (2007), who explains that, women leaders have also been found to be more empathetic and flexible as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts. They read the situation accurately and take information from all sides.
Mbani (2005), indicates that because of stereotypes, women managers have less freedom than men to display when it comes to leadership styles. Women leaders often face intense criticism from their subordinates. Even when women occupy the same leadership positions as men, factors such as patriarchal sexual hierarchy and men’s power, make women’s leadership very difficult. Sinha (1993, p. 38), suggests that women have now taken up professional roles in order to create a meaning for themselves, their potentialities and capabilities.

Sign and Medury (1993), further explains that, women tend to be motherly, hence regard the participation and contribution of all group members, unlike men who focus on the role of supervision, organisation and management of a system of rewards and punishments. Mulugeta (2007), argues that men are mostly viewed as leaders in many organisations, while women are seen as followers. Mulugeta (2007), further argues that most organisations prefer male oriented management style where aggressive and directive behaviour is the norm. When women in leadership positions adopt this style of management they may be seen as pushy, whilst men, are regarded as demonstrating leadership qualities.

This is supported by Liu (2006), who found out that women were rated by subordinates as being more transformational as well as more effective at satisfying leaders. According to Wise Greek (2012), growing recognition and acceptance that women bring different and unique talents to the work place has resulted in women making remarkable headway in organisation during the later years of this 21st Century.

As society re-evaluates the way it conducts itself and as business search for healthier ways of organising themselves the old ways are called into, Chikwanha in Chimanikire (2012), concluded that characteristics of traditional male dominated organisations where women have
been judged by masculine yardsticks are no longer, and accepted as norm. The competitive, controlling, hierarchical dictatorial critical approaches epitomised by the army, the church and the state are being strongly challenged by supporters of the more intuitive feminine qualities of co-operation, facilitation, coaching and ability to listen and encourage other people (Mudiwa, 2010).

Women are equally charismatic to men. Robbin (1999, p. 529), gives seven characteristics of charismatic leaders. Charismatic leaders are also known as inspirational leaders. Research by Shaba (2000), concluded that leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values and creating an environment within which things can be accomplished. Inspirational leaders use their unique abilities to arouse emotional response to subordinates through speeches; writings of inspirational leaders are Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandi, and Martin Luther King Junior.

Robbin (1999, p. 529) gives seven characteristics of charismatic leaders. These are:

- **Self-confidence** – charismatic leaders have complete confidence in their judgement and ability.
- **Vision** – they have an idealised goal that proposes a future better than status quo.
- **Ability to articulate the vision**, they are able to clarify and state the vision in terms that are understandable to others. This articulation demonstrates an understanding of the follower’s needs and hence act as a motivating force.
- **Strong conviction about the vision**. Charismatic leaders are perceived as being strongly committed and willing to take on high personal risk in high costs and engage in self-sacrifice to achieve their vision.
• Behaviour that is out of the ordinary. They engage in behaviour that is perceived as being novel, unconventional, when successful these behaviours surprise and evoke admiration by the followers.

• Appearance as change agents, charismatic leaders are perceived as agents of radical change rather than as caretakers of status quo.

• Environment sensitivity. They are able to make realistic assessment of the environmental, constraints and resources needed to bring about change. All the seven steps influence the effectiveness of leadership.

Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and mother Theresa were listed on the examples of charismatic leaders. Although leadership theories have shown masculinity to be a related concept of leadership, Nyandiya et al. (2000), comment that when women are given the opportunity to lead, they tend to employ leadership styles similar to those utilised by men and even add more traits of leadership than man.

2.15 Intersections of Socially Constructed Gender Identity and Leadership

In relation to the above, Liu (2006), explains that, women have struggled against a masculine form of leadership for many years. Indeed, gender identity has been socially constructed along type casting of binary norms. Only when the social categorisation is disrupted and our expectations about men and women and how they are supposed to function are exposed, do we pay attention to how sex is produced into gender. Then we realise that indicators and symbols of gender tend to be so omnipresent that we usually fail to notice them unless they are ambiguous or contradictory (Wanjiru, 2007). By successfully placing people into gender categories, we feel social balance (Lorber, 2005). For theorists, dividing gender into two norms pushes one into the position of power and the other into subjugation. This thinking initiates the “us versus them” understanding of gender differences. Women must work to
become more like those in positions of power; men must avoid becoming feminine and weak (Mbani, 2005; Chinyani, 2007; Dudu, Rembe and Wadesango 2008). When blanketing responses into these two categories, gender becomes simplified into one way of being or another. Thus, we expect women to behave like women or attempt to be manly, and we expect men to act like men. And if one works at bending gender, then criticisms fly from our social expectations about the gendered norms. When evaluating women in leadership positions, we project that they will lead in these ways that are typically female: “consensual, collaborative, and caring” (Hall et al., 2000, p. 101). If a female administrator, in her attempts to overcome men’s expectations of female incompetence (Musisa, 2009; Chinyani, 2007; Sawyer, 2002), behaves more masculine, she finds herself in a “double bind, a behavioural norm that creates a-win situation no matter what she does” (Dudu et al., 2008). But men’s expectations are not women’s only worries. In terms of securing their positions, women administrators fight the socially constructed norms of leadership. Foremost, these norms put women at odds with their own gender. As Kasante (2001), points out, “Politically and personally, women administrators are torn between being segregated into a culture of women and being integrated into a culture of men”. Women, for the sake of their leadership resiliency, begin to resist their own gender. Because of the simplified theories about gender and leadership, “women’s presentations of themselves appear to hinder as much as facilitate the promotion intention of other women” (Chabaya, 2009). This provides a point of departure to this study of the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies. Having looked at women and leadership in general, the next paragraph will look at the general problems for women.
2.16 General Problems for Women

Of importance to this study is the work of Sall (2000), who articulates that, it is an open truth, that working women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women (Runhare, 2004; Karumbidza, 2008). Working women here are referred to those who are in paid employment. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. This attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not others colours those who recruit employees. Thus, women only find employment easily as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors, secretaries or in assembling jobs-the routine submissive sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification.

Mama (2009) and Yoder (2004), are of the view that a gender bias creates an obstacle at the recruitment stage itself. When it comes to remuneration the law proclaims equality but it is seldom put into practice. The inbuilt conviction that women are capable of less work than Amen or less efficient than men governs this injustice of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their places of work (Mbani, 2005). Women on the way up the corporate ladder discover that they must be much better than their male colleagues to reach the top. Once at the top male colleagues and subordinates often expect much greater expertise and efficiency from a woman boss than from a male boss. Conditioned by social and psychological tradition women colleagues too donot lend support to their own sex. Working in such conditions inevitably puts much greater strain on women than what men experience. These problems tend to make women less eager to progress in their careers. Indeed many of them choose less demanding jobs for which they may even be over-qualified. A woman’s work is not merely confined to paid employment (Liu, 2006). Whereas Liu has researched in the industrial sector a gap still exist in the student S.G.B
According to Sall (2000), a woman has to almost always shoulder the burden of household chores as well. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she had control over the money she earns. But in most families, even now, her salary is handed over to father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment of getting independence is nullified in many women’s case. Problems of gender bias beset women in the industrial sector (Liu, 2006). Thus, this research on challenges of gender equity in tertiary institutes becomes a missing link worth researching.

Chabaya (2009), posits that technological advancement results in retrenchment of women employees. Sall (2000), further explains that, no one thinks of upgrading their skills. Maternity leave is seldom given. It is much easier to terminate the woman’s employment and hire someone else. Trade Unions do little to ameliorate a lot of women workers. Women’s issues do not occur on the priority list of most of the trade unions. Women going to work are often subject to sexual harassment. Serere (2004), notes that public transport system is overcrowded and men take advantage of the circumstances to physically harass women. Colleagues offer unwanted attention which can still be shaken off but a woman is placed in a difficult situation if the higher officer demands sexual favours (Sawyer, 2002). If refused, the boss can easily take it out on the woman in other ways to make life miserable for her (Moss Racusin, 2012). The above author’s sentiments are also true to Zimbabwe from people’s reports in newspapers.

There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women officials. On the other hand, if a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues do not hesitate to attribute it to sexual favours. The psychological pressure of all this can easily lead to a woman quitting her job. Most of the problems that beset working women are in reality rooted in the social perspective of the position of women. Traditionally, men are seen as the bread winners and women as the house-keepers,
child bearers and hearers (Mudiwa, 2010; Mulugeta, 2007). This typecast role model continues to put obstacles before the working women while much of the work family-balance research is Western-centric, it is important to review for its contribution to the field. Sall (2000) demonstrate that major transformations have occurred in family composition and that these changes in roles and relationships can have a major influence on the working lives of both women and men. These scholars explain that in North America up until the 1950s and 60s, the family usually meant “a nuclear two-generational group with parents and children in the same household where a few women worked outside the home Over the past fifty years or so, the family system has changed because of transformations in the composition of households, including both family and non-family members, and in the roles and relationships among family members (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Thus in Zimbabwe today there are different family set ups. Due to Westernisation some roles which were previously gender biased are now transformed.

In other words, family and business are embedded together and spillovers exist between the two realms. Applying this family embeddedness perspective to women in leadership, family systems influence the processes involved in women’s decisions to engage in positions of leadership by affecting resources, family transitions, and ultimately the norms, attitudes and values of each family member. Women persistently face more household demands and family responsibility (Sall, 2000), even when working outside the home because women are still expected to be the primary caregivers. This reduces time available for work and increases stress, leading to more work-family conflict and attitudes and behaviours that interfere with business leadership. Men on the other hand, are expected to be good economic providers for their families and devote time to business. Therefore, as “breadwinners” men are better able to maintain their family and work demands at the same
time than women (Chinyani, 2007; FAWE, 2004). Men tend to make greater sacrifices at home in order to maintain their work responsibilities whereas women do the opposite (Serere, 2004). Female leaders will experience less work schedule autonomy and flexibility if they continue to work in the typical retail and personal services and industries which have either inflexible hours or demanding clients (Tamalo, 2000; Sawyer, 2002; Rathberger, 2003) leaving women with less control over their work environments and higher levels of work family conflict. Family-work constraints can lead women to pull double duty with home and work responsibilities, and in turn restrict business growth rather than encourage it, give higher priority to their spouse’s careers and make sacrifices in their own.

This may results in smaller employment size, revenues, and income levels of women-led businesses. Mulugeta (2007), explains that, individuals experience the work-family interface when there is conflict from incongruity between the two spheres because of stress, time, and incompatible behaviours required for each. These work-family interface factors may offer a more robust explanation for differences between men and women (on factors like human capital, social capital, financial capital, growth orientations, and industry choice). The different life experiences that women face will cause women-led businesses to face more challenges compared to men-led businesses (Jein 1999). They respond differently to their environment, and in turn lead differently than men and for different reasons. Thus in the institutions of higher learning female students also lead differently than men. The difference is positive direction.

Individuals also experience the work-family interface in more positive ways through the benefits and enriching properties of both work and family and the effects that both realms
simultaneously have on each other. Awoniyi (2003); Sall (2000), counter the role scarcity argument that women have a fixed amount of time and energy sectioned into pieces of a figurative pie. They argue, alternatively, that the roles present in women “personal lives psychologically enhance their effectiveness in business roles. In other words, emotional abilities, multitasking, interpersonal skills, and leadership activities involved in women’s personal spheres positively spill-over into professional realms. Therefore it is the purpose of this research to unmask the interpersonal skills and abilities of female students in relations to participation in student governing bodies.

Whitehead (2004), refers to this as the role accumulation perspective – the idea that multiple roles provide some people with more energy, rather than deplete a set reserve although certain role overload and role stress can stretch a person’s limits and become burdensome. Role accumulation can be beneficial because of available enhanced psychological resources, social resources, and learning opportunities (Mama, 2005). Therefore, in this study female students in tertiary institutions can benefit the same attributes if they actively participate in student governance bodies.

There have been some inconsistencies in findings related to the validity or severity of the glass-ceiling effect. One study found that while women make up half of the workforce in developed countries these days, there are still visible glass-ceiling effects that keep women from moving into middle- and senior-level management positions – long working hours and male-dominated networks in particular (Chibango, 2011). Similarly, women are still less likely to run for political office than men, which explains the under-representation of women in politics. Reasons for this include a lack of political confidence, family responsibilities, gender role socialisation (subtle socialisation processes that politics is a man’s world), and a
lack of other women politicians to emulate (which may explain the gender role socialisation finding) (Dudu et al, 2008).

Meyer (2008); Runhare (2004) and Maruzani (2012), are of the view that context also matters in terms of mediating and moderating variables that may affect the relationship between gender and the glass-ceiling. The opposite may be true in places where women are severely marginalised and the proverbial “glass” ceiling is actually made of steel. In these cases, women not only cannot attain levels of leadership, they cannot even envision them. In other words, the level that an organisation or society falls on a women-in-leadership spectrum, from low to high participation of women in leadership, can moderate the effect of the glass-ceiling (Fletcher, 2013). This happens when members of a social group act in a way opposite of the stereotyped behaviour, leading women to covet positions of leadership, shown particularly in people with leadership self-efficacy (Hadzizi, 2006).

Rather than focusing on the differences between men and women and the ways in which they lead, some scholars (Kearney, 2000) have recognised the obvious benefits of combining both male and female leadership styles. In this way, leaders are nurturing, supporting, inclusive, assertive, decisive, and competitive all at the same time and depending on any given circumstance. In a study of politician characteristics in the US, Ree Theresa in Adelabu (2009), explains that, it was found that toughness and management skills in times of crisis are valuable traits. And that women politicians who can demonstrate that they have these skills, while simultaneously taking advantage of the perceived female edge in compassion, may have an advantage (Serere, 2004). Similarly, in another study of perceptions of leadership styles, it was found that an androgynous management style with both instrumental and expressive traits was favoured (Sing, 2002). These outcomes agree that the male and female
leadership skills should be combined. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

2.17 The Zimbabwean Government and Support of Women Advancement

Whereas, the above paragraph has looked at leadership in connection with the topic under study, The National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe (2010), has it that, the Zimbabwean government has made several attempts to empower girls and women in education, training, politics, economy and decision-making in an effort to fight gender disparities. However, educational institutions continue to reproduce disparities along gender lines. In trying to redress the problem of inequality in power distribution in the educational management in Zimbabwe, the government introduced affirmative action. The government aimed at acting affirmatively to correct inherent or innate disadvantages or disparities among individuals (Mhlahleki, 1995). Despite these corrective measures, the National Gender Policy (2008), has it that gender disparities anchored on negative socio-economic; religious; political; legal and economic values continue to permeate all aspects of human development and interaction in Zimbabwe.

• In 1981, the government set up a Ministry of Community Development and Women’s Affairs to facilitate the integration of women in developing initiatives to mobilise, organise, coordinate and monitor women’s advancement programmes and projects in the public and private sectors.

• In 1990, affirmative action programmes for the advancement of women in the civil service was introduced by public service commission. The commission set an initial target of thirty percent’s female representation at all levels in the public service.
• In 1994, gender issues department was set up in the office of the president and cabinet to maintain the implementation of the national gender in gender and the platform of action from Beijing women’s conference.

• In 2000, the quota system policy was announced that was for every three administrative position, at least one was to be occupied by a female. The implementation of the policy saw Mrs Mujuru budding in the post of Vice President (NGP, 2008).

One of the major problems in achieving gender equality in education is that, despite women’s increased access to school and extended years in education, the knowledge and skills they have acquired in schools tend to reproduce rather than to alter gender ideologies (Mongella, 2002). In relation to the above, the next paragraph discusses the global eye on gender inequality.

2.18 Global Eye on Gender Equity

Most literature on gender portrays that the education management is dominated by males in most areas of the world. Men generally seem to have higher self-esteem than women. Giddens (2000), is of the opinion that women’s self-esteem is largely influenced by their perception of their sense of interdependence and connection with others. In contrast, men’s self-esteem stems from their assessment of their unique characteristics and abilities Sall (2000). These are traits that help them distinguish themselves from women. Rathberger (2003,) believes that men and women differ in how they view their own abilities and how they estimate the probability of their success. Hogg and Vaughan (2005), agree to the notion that women differ from men in their verbal and non-verbal communication styles. In this regard, women are generally more extraverted and, their behaviour is typically more nurturing, showing more tenderness and trust than men. Schaefer (2004), thinks that men tend
to communicate power and dominance in situations where there is an element of competition like learning in groups which can be taken as an opportunity to show that boys are better than girls. Therefore the general notion by the above authors is that men dominate the education management. This research will therefore probe deeper to find out if the situation in student GB is the same with the above given views.

Related to this study is the work of Moyana (1992), who say, roles and responsibilities that curtsied the workplace differ by gender in all cultures. Chinese culture emphasises the value of sons who are necessary to carry on the family name. Daughters marry out and become part of their husband’s family. Phenomenon

According to Barrow (2005), gender bias is the unequal treatment in opportunities and expectations due to attitudes based on sex of a person. He further describes it at discrimination based on sex. According to Fletcher (2013), gender bias refers to sexiest attitudes that stem from traditional stereotypes of gender roles and may include the belief that a person of one sex is intrinsically superior to a person of the other sex. Alexander (2010), purports that gender bias, is the unequal treatment, inopportunity and expectations due to attitudes based on the sex of an individual or a group of individuals.

Mataruse (2011), is in disagreement with many scholars; his view is that females usually receive more attention than boys due to their physical appearance. They receive complements more often than boys on their clothing, hairstyle and appearance. All this complementally affects boys. While much socialisation occurs in childhood, sex role socialisation continues over the entire life span. It is through verbal and non-verbal communication that people construct their self-identity.
Meyer (2008), Wise Greek (2012), are of the view that, gender roles are enacted, manifested and altered through communication itself. Both explicit and implicit messages received from role models like parents, teachers, peers and other forms of public communication serve to model and re-enforce behaviour which is viewed as being appropriate and inappropriate for one’s sex role (Lowe, 2011). Through interaction with other mediated messages, individuals learn what behaviours are considered appropriate for women and men. Thus, it is natural for children to learn the behaviours that they have been exposed to by their parents and significant others. Liu (2006), explains that, children acquire a gender role identity because of the different treatment, expectations and reinforcements given to girls and boys by their parents.

Gender role is a constellation of qualities an individual understands to characterise male and females in their culture. These qualities include activities, role relations, social positions, personal characteristics and a host of abilities. Moyo and Fox (2000), note that boys are taught their roles through stories at the fire place in the evenings while girls spent their time with the mothers in the kitchen. This reflects that cultural education is informal as well as gender stereotyped, however in Zimbabwe these days a different dimension is taking place through televisions, internet and social media which still continue to perpetuate gender inequity e.g. films of wrestling it would appear men are conquering the world.

Important to this study is the work of Tarta (2001), who studied primary school children and found out that most male children wish to become doctors and engineers, while most female children talk of becoming nurses and nuns. Children, therefore, maintain the aspirations of gender stereotype roles. Awoniyi (2003), asserts that a society performs a socialising function transmitting the culture of the society to a new generation. Socialisation begins at the moment of birth. Initial gendering is in form of giving names to children. As soon as the doctor
announces the sex of the child a name is given to suit that sex. One is socialised into gender according to the norms of that society (Moyo and Fox, 2000).

Important to this study is the work of Tatar and Emmanuel (2001), who made a research on secondary schools in Nigeria and observed that societal stereotype by parent, peers, and teachers who influence and reinforce gender roles cause the discrepancies in male and female student achievement. Although the study focused on secondary school students, the results reflected the influence of early socialisation. The results indicated that girls on the whole have greater social and psychological disabilities than boys and this affects their opportunity for education and their achievement in school.

According to Holmes (2003), one way that children learn their gender roles is by observing and initiating adult roles first in the home and later in the school. They may also imitate teachers and administrators. They also observed the ratio of the authority structure in the school, thus the government of Zimbabwe formulated the National Gender Policy (2013-2017), with a vision of a gender just society in which men and women enjoy equity, contribute and benefit as equal partners in the development of this country. Having looked at the global eye on gender, the next paragraph discusses gender and sports.

2.19 Gender and Sports

According to Halley (2000), gender and sexuality issues in sports identifies barriers to female participation that still remain despite the widely legislated equality of access to sport and physical activities. Jein (1990), in a study of factors influencing low and high body image that girls recorded lower level of participation in organised sports. Similarly, Hall (2000), in a study of constrinson recreational sport participation found that married females were significantly more constrained than single females because of their domestic responsibilities. The above authors agree that females have a challenge in sporting however; married females
have more challenges, therefore if they do not participate in sports, how can they attract posts of leadership in sports. The current Might Warriors team is led by a male couch.

Young (1998), while investigating the exclusion of women from sports noted that to a large extent the sanction by some cultures on girl’s physical activity reduces the level of their physical activity especially relative to boys. Sall (2000), submitted that sports have traditionally been regarded as an unequivocally masculine endeavour, which therefore, means that females should not engage. In situations where females participate in sport, evidence has shown that sports associated with light activities are preferred. In relation to the American context, Lewis (2004), points out that the cultural and social directions of the African people, to a large extent, impinged the effective participation of females in sport generally. According to Iverson (2009), African warriors were able bodied males. The African culture regarded females as weaker subordinates whose main function was production of children and food for consumption. Females were forbidden to take part in vigorous activities. In fact, the biological make-up of the females limited the rate of their participation in sport. Females in students governance bodies also leads and directs sports thus sports becomes a research gap that needs to be attended to, if the college administrations are to truly understand how to support females to be involved in students governance bodies organisation at tertiary institutions.

According to (Stronquist, 2007), throughout history women have been perceived as inferior and have been denied access to equal opportunity in most social institutions including sport. However, Research by Mamashela (2009), has shown that women are not biologically or intellectually inferior to men, rather they have somewhat lower limits in physical potential. Mudiwa (2010), speculates that women were prohibited from attending the ancient Olympic Games both as spectators and participants. Bizley (2006), differs and explains that evidence show that women have been taking part in sport throughout history. However, women sports
have been taking second place to men. According to Camel (2004), for men, sport was a substitute for war and a change to show the fighting skills, bravery and strength. Little (2003), further explains that the so called feminine sports, such as gymnastics, netball and hockey have always attracted women participation. However, nowadays women are taking part in sporting games such as, soccer, rugby, wrestling and boxing. Apart from prejudice, women face some difficulties. It is against this background that the research seeks to probe the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies. It is through sporting that the females can be involved in the office like sports officer in SRC or ZITCOSSA.

2.20 Zimbabwe’s Peculiarity on Gender

Related to the above, this paragraph looks at Zimbabwe’s peculiarity on gender. When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, ZANU-PF initialised mass education to eradicate inequalities (Lindrell, 2000). Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009), explain that in the political structure the king, who was a man, was the head of the state. He was responsible for distributing land, leading the army and religious ceremonies. There were gender roles, for example, the army defended the state from the enemies, raided other states for cattle, people and land and enforced tribute collection.

In relation to the above, Karumbidza (2008), explains that, on the social structure the Great Zimbabwe people were pelerine, which means inheritance was along the male line. The Great Zimbabwe people practiced polygamy and paid lobola (bride price). There was division of labour on gender lines. Men and women had specific tasks, male duties were to herd cattle, build houses, making tools, skinning animals and milking cows. Female duties were looking after children, cooking food, gathering firewood, fetching water and making pottery among others. Having many girl children was a symbol of wealth just as having many cattle. According to the Zimbabwe Human Development Report (ZHDR) (2007), it is important to emphasise that this division of labour did not emanate from the need for men to subordinate
women but it reflected men’s appreciation of the triple burden women had of production, reproduction and caring.

The major role of authority occupied by women in the pre-colonial Zimbabwe was that of spirit medium ship, for example, Nehanda and Charwe were mediums of Chaminuka. Rutoro (2012), has it that the most important factor which intensified gender problems was education, migration to towns (urbanisation) and religious conversion. This different view seem to suggest that in the pre-colonial era women had positions of high influence though they were a very few of women. This affected women’s roles in their societies, families and economy. The advent of colonialism saw the further entrenchment of gender roles as men left their traditional homes to work on settler farms and mines to earn money to pay taxes. Lowe and Nyakujara (2000), establishes that in Zimbabwe, decisions about the girl’s future are prescribed by tradition and lack of input from mother/caregiver. Their research findings were that in rural areas girls start school at the age of six. In Zimbabwe, the problem of gender is influenced by the cultural beliefs that girls should be trained for latter married life and that education is more important to girls than boys. According to the Zimbabwe Human Development Report (ZHDR) (2007), the indigenous inhabitants of present-day Zimbabwe lived nomadic lives and survived largely by gathering and hunting. Women and children gathered fruits and vegetables while men were engaged largely in hunting. The division of labour was dictated by the differential biological make up of men and women. Women were involved in tasks related to their reproduction and nursing biological roles.

The division of labour reflected that men need to protect the family and not to abusethem, as might be inferred. Chinyami (2007), states the division of labour between men and women that had begun in the gatherer societies developed into a relationship of inequality in settled farming societies. The association of women with domestic work had become a firmly
established tradition. Women and children grew most of the crops and cooked the food but they did not have any rights. Land was the means of production within these agrarian societies. The ZHDR Report (2007), notes that land belonged to the patriarchy. It was controlled and distributed by male heads of society, ranging from headman to chiefs. Land belonged to male heads of households. According to Aribino (1996), women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe did not control the means of production in agriculture and metallurgy, but instead provided much of the labour required in these occupations. Cheater goes on to assert that it is possible to regard women in pre-colonial societies as comprising the equivalent of the class of labour. This was the beginning of male supremacy over women as they did the riskier tasks which could not be performed by women due to their reproductive roles. Children were seen as an asset in that they provided labour, in which case the more children a woman had, the higher her status within the marital family she joined. So, a woman’s status was judged by her reproductive ability.

Female authority grew with time. While the newly married wife had no authority in her husband’s home, by the time she acquired grandchildren she was a force to be reckoned with in the family. Aribino (1996), shows that post-menopausal women became a type of ‘honorary males’ as they abandoned domestic duties to the work of younger females. However, their influence remained in the private sphere as even elderly women did not frequent the male world of decision-making. Shaba (2000), notes that the major role of authority occupied by women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe was that of spirit medium ship. The mhondoro spirits of deceased chiefs’ like Chaminuka were predominantly male. However, their mediums were as likely to be males as females, for example, Charwe the medium of Nehanda. The medium became identified with the spirit. The authority of the spirit over rode the prior social identity of the medium. Therefore, in the role of being spirit medium, the fact
of being female was irrelevant to the practice of spiritual authority. The demands of the male spirit were legitimate even when these interfered with the modal social personality of a woman. Dudu (2008), argues that, “traditional belief systems afforded women who refused to conform to the standard female social personality, an escape route into individualised positions of power as well as authority.” The authority of traditional religion whose defenders were mainly spirit mediums whether male or female, overrode and determined secular political authority normally wielded by men. Thus, in pre-colonial Zimbabwe the authority bestowed on women was not because of themselves as women, but because of the male spirit. Thus the society respected the spirit through the medium.

According to Karumbidza (2008), black women in particular have been highly discriminated against during the colonial era. The colonialists promoted gender equality but in the process reduced based equalities. This was largely influenced by several regional and international declarations and protocols which seek to create an attainment of equality between men and women. According to Chabaya (2009), the patriarchal Zimbabwean society placed women on subordinate roles in the family. The lowering of women’s status was further exacerbated by the colonial government which also introduced customary law in which women wielded very little power, if any, in both civic and social circle. Thus even the acquisition of property the males seem to dominate. Also the fast track land reform is further allination women from both possession and ownership of land. Since most people acquiring the land are men. According to Storner (2005), under customary law, property was owned by husbands and women were reduced to properties and dependents that had to submit to the will and wishes of their husbands. In this research, gender equity calls for a just distribution of benefits and rewards between men and women. In tertiary institutes, there should be equal enjoyment by women and men of social valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Achieving
gender equality requires change in the institutional practices and policies and social relations through which disparities are re-enforced and sustained.

2.21 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming focuses on individual rights and equality by ensuring that men and women are treated equally. Gender mainstreaming involves action which focuses on group disadvantages within institutions and or communities (UNICEF, 2006). Thus, demanding action designed to equalise the starting positions rather than equality of access (Sweetman, 2000). Gender mainstreaming is a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, so that the gender perspective becomes an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. It encompasses the ability to anticipate the potentially differential impact of policy actions on women and men as well as the ability to design policy actions that are not “gender-blind”, but “gender-sensitive”. Policy actions are gender-sensitive if they recognise the potentially different interests and needs of women and men based on their potentially different social experiences, opportunities, roles and resources. Gender mainstreaming was originally launched in 1996 after the Beijing platform of action to promote gender equality in all European Union policies (Mama, 2000). Nonetheless, gender mainstreaming did not particularly focus on student governance bodies, and thus this research filled that gap. Having looked at gender mainstreaming, the next paragraph will look at gender dynamics and young women.
2.22 Gender dynamics affecting young women in tertiary institutions.

Goche (2014), explains that, young women are often prevented from accessing tertiary education because of the responsibilities imposed upon them. At primary education level, there are many girls in class, but as school progresses the numbers of girls dwindle dramatically. The few who manage to qualify for tertiary institutions continue to be strained both physically and mentally by gender roles and responsibilities constructed from them (Mudiwa, 2010). Girls are blinkered into seeing themselves through the lens of our society, informed by Africans predominantly patriarchal cult. Goche (2014) explains that governments have failed to pay attention to addressing the basic needs of young women, for example, sanitary wear is a basic requirement for every young woman. It comes at a high cost even though the biological process of menstruation is not hers by choice. With the harsh economic situation prevailing in most economies, especially for the unemployed youth, many young women are tempted to engage in transactional sex in order to meet this essential need, putting themselves at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). Thus, young women should be involved in the governance bodies of tertiary institutes so that they are actively involved in the challenges they meet at universities and teachers’ colleges.

Goche (2014,) further propounds that universities are microcosm of mainstream society. At tertiary institutions, girls rarely take up leadership positions in any space. What is more worrying though, is that universities should have the power to shape and challenge already existing cultural norms (Tong, 2009; Ford, 2002). University students are expected to fill the top echelons of society because they have advanced to the highest level of education. It is disheartening that young women in these institutions still conform to the disempowering
script society has written for them, yet they are the ones who should be defying the script and showing others the vast possibilities that exist for women (Kearney, 2000; Davis, 1997). Thus it is thought this study of the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies whereby the challenge is to be exposed. The next paragraphs, therefore, discusses organisational barriers to advancement.

2.23 Organizational Barriers to Woman Advancement

Important to this study is the work of Eagly and Carli (2007). They propound that barriers are seen while others are invisible or subtle. As employees have increased educational attainment, their weekly work hours increase, work life balance becomes an issue to women who still have a primary function of caring for the family. In the findings of Mashall (2004), who researched on student affairs administrators, the discussion was that women shared that family responsibilities caused them to disengage from professional organisations. Another barrier to advancement for women is the organisational culture and fitting in. Reviewed research calls attention to the discussion of leadership being identified as a masculine characteristic (Mbani, 2005). According to Mabokela (2003, p. 132), organisations that have strong cultures often provide cues for members on how to behave and act. In these strong organisational cultures, minorities are required to conform to the values and norms of the majority culture with limited opportunities to assert their own beliefs. From the background of the study in chapter one, women are not a minority in the college environment as students but are underrepresented in senior positions (Britton, 2000, p. 430), who asserts that mere numerical proportional representation tells us little about women lived experiences when it comes to educational policies, practices and programmes. It is, therefore, important to discuss the impact of colonialism on gender in Zimbabwe.
2.24 The Impact of Colonization on Gender in Zimbabwe

The ZHDR (2007), alludes that during colonialism, even though the Blackman was exploited, they had access to a new source of scarce resources, money. This gave them a more privileged position than women in the increased monetised economy. Men acquired consumer goods adding women’s economic dependence on their working husbands. Men migrated to towns to look for jobs whilst women were left behind to take care of the children and home.

The colonial education system in Rhodesia did not have a specific policy for the education of women and girls. According to FAWE (2004), policies were race specific and gender neutral. There were two types of education systems namely the African Division and the European Division. The European Division was non-fee paying, compulsory and of higher quality. Inadequate education provisions were meant for black children.

The colonial education system had a policy of bottle necking in the education of African children only 12.5% of African children completing primary education could proceed to secondary education (F1 schools). In mid 1970s a further 37.5% of primary school graduates were admitted to vocational secondary schools (F2) and the remaining 50% were expected to fend for themselves (Awoniyi, 2003). Such policies further marginalised female children who were already under represented in the education system. Thus, it is also important to discuss women administrators in education. Such policies further marginalised the girl child who was not given a wider opportunity to proceed to secondary school. The African children who proceeded were mainly boys. Females were under represented in the education sector because parents would opt to send a boy child to school than a girl.
2.25 Women Administrators in Educational Leadership Programmes

Although educational administration and leadership departments in colleges of education are known to have more women administrators than those of almost any other discipline in the academy (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2005), research ignores why their duration is short lived and what significant contributions they have made (Sall, 2000). In fact, most research suggests that despite access for women in these programmes, the longevity of their service is most tenuous. Rathberger (2003), asserts that human community is characterised by a basic structural injustice, a distorted relationship between the sexes such that men, as a group, have power over women as a group. Due to this distortion, women face varied problems in the Zimbabwean context. These problems were gender based and they arise from gender based socialisation, gender based stereotyping, gender based violence as well as gender based discrimination in all spheres. Cunningham and Hamilton (2000), point out that many societies are in a state of transition regarding the status of women; hence many women in the world are facing a dilemma of identity. According to Moorosi (2007), in her study of South African schools, “the barriers facing women in educational management are numerous, multi-faceted, highly complex in nature and deeply inter-woven in cultural norms and values.” According to Higgs and Smith (2000), women’s experiences differ so enormously depending on the country they live, their religion, their social history and culture. This means that, the politics of professional glass ceiling are not universal but always dictated by cultural norms and values.

Several metaphors in research indicate that many factors keep women from staying in formal positions of leadership (Shaba, 2000). If these women identify themselves as change agents and either set up to modify the way that departments meet student needs or change programmes themselves, their credibility and positioning decay even faster.
2.26 The Zimbabwean Situation on Women Leadership

Zvobgo (1999), observed that, statistics in the year 2000 according to UNICEF indicated that 59% of the total populations were women. Zimbabwe is a highly patriarchal society which traditionally placed very little value on women’s participation in activities outside the home. According to Chinyani (2007), women’s inferior status had a negative impact on virtually every aspect of life in legal matters. Women were miners under the law passing from guardianship of their fathers to that of their husbands upon marriage. This made it impossible for a woman to enter into any contract without the backing of a male. She could not own or inherit property in her own right except [mombeyeumai] a mother’s cow from her daughters’ brideprice (lobola). Sibanda (2008), posits that the government had to redress the situation. The breakthrough came during the liberation struggle when women fought side by side with men on equal footing, demonstrating that they were indeed a force to reckon and thus destroying the old myth that women’s place was in the kitchen (Chinyani, 2007).

In relation to this study, Aribino (1996), explains that, soon after independence, most governments of developing countries reformed their education system to align them with national goals. Thus many policies have been fashioned by government to redress gender inequalities. Zvobgo (2014), points out that after independence, Zimbabwe reformed its educational system to align with the new national goals of independence. Since 1980, there has been an effective and concerted effort to empower women through enhancement of women’s rights and equal opportunities. Equal improvement on female education even at primary schools was seen in 1980. The proportion of female students was 47.6 as compared to 42.4 percent males. At entry to primary level, there are an equal number of boys and girls. Female’s dropout from school at senior primary level and at university and college the male and female gap widens further (Mataruse, 2011).
The July (1985, p. 6) UNICEF, Ministry of Community Development and Women’s Affairs document commended that the government in its five year development plan and its policy of growth with equity, emphasises as one of its objectives that obstruct women’s participation must be removed. The Three Year National Development Plan is designed to serve as a vehicle through which the nation mobilises the human and material resources of the country in an effort to establish an egalitarian state. This clearly indicates that the government recognises women as a potential human resource for engineering socio, eco change in Zimbabwe. According to Zvobgo (1999), though the government of Zimbabwe had set up women’s ministry to deal with women’s affairs, its resources are few and a few women have power in government. The cabinet has more men and women are a minority (Kambarami, 2006).

The Zimbabwe Report on United Nations Decade for Women (1985, p. 6) emphasises that, in order to accelerate the advancement of women and also to comply with the United Nation Decade for Women Objectives, the government established the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Community Development (1981). A survey by UNICEF in 1982 exposed the nature of participation of women in the national economy and the system influencing that participation which has been inherited from the former colonial regime. The survey showed that in July 1981 women contributed only 22% of all professional workers. The survey also showed that women were confined to a limited range of jobs that they received lower salaries than males that women especially black women had little education.

FAWE (2004), notes that the government researched from these reports and recommended the removal of discriminatory laws and practice which hinder women’s development and their ability to participate in national life as equals. Factors that hinder or discourage women at workplaces continue to be examined and remedial measures sought. These factors include
discriminating hiring practices, wage disparities between men and women for the same work, 
low promotion prospects, unsatisfactory maternity leave arrangements among others. This 
research examined further issues in women leadership in student governing bodies of 
Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.

2.27 Types of Leadership Styles

In summary, to the extent that gender roles spill over to influence leadership behaviour in 
organisational settings, the behaviour of female leaders, compared with that of male leaders, 
maybe more interpersonally oriented, democratic, and transformational. In contrast, the 
behaviour of male leaders, compared with that of female leaders, may be more task-oriented 
and autocratic. In addition, the greater incongruence of the female than male gender role with 
typical leader role may make it more difficult for women than men to manifest the leadership 
styles. However, because of the constraining impact of leadership roles, any differences 
between women and men who occupy the same role are unlikely to be large in size.

2.28 Attitudinal Barriers on Females in Leadership

Despite the gains that women have made, negative attitudes and stereotypes of women as 
leaders still prevail in many cultures. Karumbidza (2008), Moyo and Fox (2000), prejudiced 
attitudes towards female supervisors include the belief that women do not make good leaders, 
since the model of the successful manager is based on masculine traits (Dyanda, 2004). These 
stereotypical beliefs about women in managerial positions generate the idea that having the 
traditional male characteristic is a better predictor for success, thus reinforcing the belief to 
“think manager-think male” (Schein as cited in Sall., 2002). Consequently, stereotypical 
notions perceive women who had achieved key managerial positions, as being successful 
imitators of characteristics believed to be utterly a male domain. The above authors generally 
agree that females are stereotyped to be hard to work with.
Culture seems to have a minimal influence on men’s attitudes towards female managers. This can be seen in research carried out by Cordano and Owen (2002), which indicates no cultural differences in the acceptance of women as managers. Similarly, research carried out in Greece also indicates how Greek men held several biases and prejudices against women in management Cordano and Owen. (2002. Several studies including a study carried out in Malta by Vella (1999), indicate that women managers in male-dominated organisations are more likely to encounter difficulties in achieving social integration among their male peers. This is because males tend to find it difficult to relate to a female superior especially if the latter is younger than her male subordinates. Female subordinates, on the other hand, seem to prefer working for a female boss. (Borg, 2001; Meyer 2008). Nonetheless, the study by Davidson (1996), also illustrates that a small percentage of female interviewees reported what is termed bystanders (as cited in Davidson, 1990) as “the queen bee syndrome”, which refers to how female subordinates perceive their female bosses as either dominant or bossy. Such labels are given particularly to females who adopt a “male-oriented” managerial style by using direct and aggressive behaviour. Ironically, these same behaviours are considered as a prerequisite for the male leader (Liu, 2006). Gender stereotypes are thus keeping women at a minority in managerial positions. This is a dangerous stance, since it may also lead to the “strength in number” hypothesis as proposed by Rathberger (2006). Shaba explains that because women in managerial positions are not proportionately represented in organisations, they are in a vulnerable position, simply because they are in a minority. Subsequently, women in managerial posts are usually viewed as tokens (Sall, 2000). This means that they have fewer political allies, fewer mentors and less role model. Yet, ironically, they are more visible and they face a greater chance to be viewed stereotypically. Furthermore, stereotyped
expectations can lead individuals to behave in the expected manner, consequently, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy (Sawyer, 2002).

Sign and Medury (2003), made the observation that some women have now taken up professional roles in order to create meaning for themselves and society. They have risen above social, cultural traditions to take serious role for themselves, their potentials and their capabilities. However, as these women advance through better education, changing social and cultural values, they are facing difficulties. Sinha classified the problems into three types, which are environmental, social and psychological. Garrant (1998, p. 17), mentioned four managerial barriers which are attitudes of organisations, family pressures and personal limitations. The authors differ in their wording, but generally they all agree on the environment as being a cause of concern.

Warkins (2002), observes that, though each woman’s story was unique, they all tell of challenges familiar to every woman who seeks power and influence in a male dominated culture. One of the major challenges is balancing personal and professional responsibilities. A working woman, head especially a married and has a dual responsibility of looking after her home, husband and children on one side and her job on the other side. According to Sall (2009), though she maybe adding considerably to her family’s income, her job, is looked upon as “secondary” and her husband and in-laws expect her to do all the work of a full time house-wife. Such environmental problems may hinder female students to maximise their effective leadership potential. Furthermore, being a leader at an institution demands a lot of time, such that the working women often spend less time with the children and this often makes her guilty of neglecting them. From the above sentiments the issue of balancing time is
very difficult for females. Since women have extra work at home which the males live for them to do.

Sinha (1993), explained that a working woman overstrains herself in trying to manage both home and work spheres. Furthermore, if she gives more importance to her work and neglects her home, she is not only accused of being vain, inefficient and useless as a wife and a mother, but is made to feel guilty, about it. In this regard, unmarried working teachers seem to have fewer obstacles that hinder them in accepting promotions to headship. They do not have so many responsibilities thus, many working mothers who aspire to grow in professional positions, prefer to remain unmarried. However, this may again cause a social stigma to be attached to them (Moyo and Fox, 2000; Kasante, 2002 and Ford, 2002).

One other critical problem women face as leaders is the cultural and traditional factors. People are part of the society and they carry their cultural beliefs to their places of employment Shaba (2000, p. 4). Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society. Patriarchy gives power to the men to control women. Thus even at work, in the patriarchal society, man regardless of his status, age and achievements is still considered superior to any woman regardless of how she may surpass the man in status, age and achievement (Ford, 2002; Fletcher, 2013; Chabaya Rembe and Wadesango, 2009). The education system tends to reform than to revolutionise; Feminists use reformationist approach for female liberation. Thus a few women, who have succeeded and thrown themselves into the fray of leadership posts, did so not through a reformative stand point but through a revolutionary standpoint. The, “I am going to do it right now! “. Thus the female students should be self, motivated in the first term of the college life. This further fuelled the researcher to embark on this research particularly focusing on student governing bodies in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.
Anderson (1997), found that some cultural beliefs hold that women are inferior and dependent on men; therefore, they cannot be effective leaders. Kasante’s (2001), research on women in employment sector in Zimbabwe found that the main reason for unequal relations in the workplace is the myth of women being weaker and dependent. Important to this study is the work of Mongella (2000, p. 41), who asserts that one major cause of gender inequalities in education and health is the pre-dominance of men in decision-making positions, the majority of school administrators, ministerial, bureaucrats and technocrats are men. The decisions concerning curriculum, recruitment of staff and students are likely to be influenced by their own baggage of culture ideology which believes that women are not capable of leading.

Another problem is that women are often sexually exploited by their male bosses. Sinha (1995, p. 106) elaborates that it is not only in the family that men use violence to control women or keep their jobs. Women who work often have to put up with bosses who sexually harass them or even force them to have sex. This sexual harassment happens to women in factories, offices, domestic workers and school girls, (Chabaya, et al 2009). Sexual harassment is defined by Shaba (2000), as any conduct of sexual nature, uninvited and unwanted that has an effect of placing the victim in a situation where they are made to work in a hostile environment. From popular reports in newspapers, female students in tertiary institutions suffer sexual harassment because they are desperate to pass. Thus they do not repeat the cases.

According to Davidson (2012), Cleverland (1994), a woman in non-traditional female jobs including managerial jobs are more likely to experience sexual harassment (Clarke 1986 and
Leveland 1994), in a depth study of 60 British female, managers, all white, the author found that 52% of the sample reported that they had experienced sexual harassment at work. Tamalo (2000) has it that, the behavior of sexual harassment can takes physical verbal or non-verbal forms and ranges from gross (rape) to subtitle which is difficult to prove. Research by Shaba (2000:43) made the following conclusions. Sexual harassers usually target people who are in a vulnerable position. Thus in the African context females may not open up on whether they were sexually harassed. They are afraid of being embarrassed. It is on the basis of the afore said missing links the researcher sought to unearth the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies.

2.29 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature on the participation of female students in student governance in tertiary institutions. The Liberal Feminist theory and Ubuntu philosophy were used as the framework for the study. The theory aims at giving both men and women the freedom to make choices for themselves. The theories also seek to advance ideas to protect women’s rights and social welfare. The chapter also reviewed literature on female students’ participation in decision-making within tertiary institutions. The policies implemented to promote the participation of women were also discussed. Furthermore, the chapter presented factors believed to hinder female students’ participation as well as empirical studies that outlined the nature of female students in student governance in different tertiary institutions. The researcher noted that there are still glaring gaps in literature which still need to be filled. There is vast literature on gender and leadership, general problems for women, affirmative action, gender socialisation among others, but linking these areas to the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies in Zimbabwe remains a rich area for research. This research sought to fill the grey areas which have been identified in the review of related literature. The next chapter will present the Research Methodology.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two was a review of related literature about gender equity. Literature reviewed was in relation to the research questions. This chapter focused on the research methodology which was employed in this study of the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. The chapter presents a qualitative research approach. The interpretive research paradigm used in this study. It begins with a discussion of the research paradigm, which is the lens to this study, followed by a description of the research design and data collection procedures. The issues regarding trustworthiness and ethical considerations will also be discussed. Finally, the chapter spells out how data gathered was processed, analysed and interpreted. The next section describes the philosophical underpinnings of this study, which are ontology and epistemology

3.2 Ontology

Ontology is about the furniture of the world or what there is or the basic assumptions about the nature of reality. In ontology, the question is: What is the nature of reality i.e. “What kind of things exists?” and “What do we say about the things that are claimed to exist?” (Bryan Magee with Willard Van Oman Quine, In Men of Ideas.) Therefore this study took the interpretive view that there is multiplicity in reality out there. Ontology in this research was seeking to find out the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies. “Why are female students not fully participating in leadership posts?
Ontological Assumptions:

- Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective; thus in this study, the gathered participants views were compiled to make meaning as they answered the research questions. Therefore people interpret and make their own meaning of events.

- Events are distinctive and cannot be generalised; in this research, the investigation centered on Harare province and the results cannot be generalised.

- There are multiple perspectives on one incident; and causation in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols (Cohen et al., 2000). Thus in these research perspectives of Deans of students, students in SGB and general students will bring out multiple ideas on the issue of gender equity in SGB of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.

Dascombe (2002), argue that ontology specifies the nature or essence of the social phenomena or reality being investigated; hence pure reality cannot be known as it can only be interpreted through our senses and experiences resulting in differing perspectives of reality.

According to Hoijer (2008), this leads to questions of whether social reality is external to the individual, that is, imposing itself on his/her consciousness from without or whether it is the product of the individual’s consciousness. Is reality of an objective nature, or the result of individual cognition? Is it given ‘out there’ in the world, or is it created by one’s mind? As a result everyone has his/her own interpretation of reality that emerges from one’s epistemology.

3.3. Epistemology

Epistemology is theory of knowledge which asks 2 basic questions: 1. (What is the nature of the human mind?) 2. “What kind of things is it able to know?” (Thelma Levine 1984, From Socrates to Sartre: A philosophical Quest). Therefore, it follows from what has been declared
above (on ontology) that the furniture of the world is what can be pursued as knowledge. But according to phenomenology, which is the philosophical foundation of qualitative paradigm, the kind of thing known by the human mind in only a phenomenon or appearance. So the phenomenon under inquiry is the social phenomenon called the cahallenges of gender equity in student’s governance. According to Trochin in Krauss (2005,) epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know. Hoijer (2008), explore whether it is possible to identify and communicate the nature of knowledge as being hard, real and capable of being transmitted in tangible form or whether ‘knowledge’ is of a softer, more subjective, and spiritual or even transcendental kind, based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature. Therefore in this study the experience of Deans of students and all the other students will bring out the required knowledge of the issue of gender equity in SGB in Zimbabwe.

The epistemological assumption in these instances determine extreme positions on whether knowledge is something that has to be acquired on one hand, or is something which has to be personally experienced on the other (Burrell and Morgan in Cohen et al., 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Epistemological assumptions concern the very bases of knowledge, its nature and forms, how it can be acquired and how it is communicated to other human beings (Burrell &Morgan in Cohen et al., 2006). Epistemology, as viewed by Krauss (2005), argues that epistemology is intimately related to ontology and methodology. As ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it. Our knowledge about the phenomena is organised and increased through methodology which is a set of rules, principles and formal conditions that ground and guide scientific inquiry. Therefore in this study a formal set of rules on the research process is outlined through the methodology. A
paradigm is an overarching perspective concerning appropriate research practice, based on ontological and epistemological assumption (O’Leary, 2004). Epistemology is the basic assumptions about what we can know about reality, and about the relationship between knowledge and reality. It answers questions on what is knowledge and what do we know about reality (Silverman, 2000).

3.4 Research Paradigm

The paradigm of this research seeks to construct meaning from the ideas raised by participants.

3.4.1 Interpretive paradigm

There are three basic paradigms in social science research; these are positivism, interpretivism and constructivism. This study was grounded on interpretive paradigm. The researcher focused on the perceptions of the female and male students in the tertiary institutions. Deans of students’ perceptions were also very important to this study. The approach sought to record and interprets all the facts and values as perceived by the participants. It is also sometimes referred to as constructivism because it emphasises the ability of individuals to construct meaning as was done in this research on the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions. According to Neumann (2008), the definition of interpret is to elucidate or bring out the meaning or to explain or understand behaviour. According to Thomas (2009), the world in which we are interested in as social scientists is not straight forwardly perceived because it is constructed by each of us in different ways. This view is called interpretivism and it was started by the American sociologist George Herbert Mead. The main point about interpretivism is that we are interested in people and that they interrelate what they think and how they form ideas about this world. In this research the researcher immersed herself in the research context of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institutions. The researcher

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talked to people in depth and attended to every nuance of behaviour and every clue to the meanings that are investing in something. The researcher was a participant in the research situation in order to understand it from an insider’s perspective.

There are a growing number of paradigms in research; however, the most associated with educational research are the positivist and interpretive paradigm. Both paradigms represent opposing world views with regard to which reality is understood (ontology) and the production of knowledge epistemology. According to Burton (2011, p. 60), a positivist researcher seeks generalisation and hard quantitative measurable data by means of employing scientific approach. In contrast, the interpretive researcher aims to explore the perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insight and a deeper understanding of phenomena occurring in the social world by means of collecting predominately qualitative data. This research understood the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutes. The next section, therefore, discusses the approach to be taken in this research.

3.5 Qualitative Approach

The approach permits the description of phenomena and events in an attempt to explain and understand them. The research focused on the perceptions of the participants. How people think affects their actions. The researcher sought to explain and interpret rather than to measure the evidence revealed by the study. Qualitative research methodologies have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for social sciences and applied fields such as, Education. Rossman (2011), describe the qualitative approach as a research technique based on the phenomenological paradigm which uses interpretive methodologies. Sharing the same view, Luttrell (2010) and Stephen (2009), assert that qualitative research refers to a way of conducting, and conceiving research where the researcher is the key instrument or the tool for
designing, collecting, and analysing data. The researcher focused on the perceptions of Deans of Students at tertiary institutions involved. According to Kothari, (2004, p. 30), qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting. The researcher is part of the process. The research problems may be constantly redefined. There is no control of variables. The study seeks to record and interpret all the facts and values as perceived by the participants. Thus, this research sought to understand individual perspectives on the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisation of tertiary institutions.

Qualitative research, in contrast with quantitative research design, does not translate aspects of the world into numbers or quantities to be analysed mathematically. Instead it analyses through the tenses of research (Schowandt, 2007, p. 104). Qualitative research is also referred to as a naturalistic research of inquiry into everyday living. According to Denzin and Lincolin (2005, p. 80) in this research, direct observations are made of human behaviour in the natural setting. Qualitative research provides understanding and description of the people’s personal experiences of phenomenon. Participants shared their views and experiences in a natural way. Thus, according to Zakiya (2008, p. 86), since coping strategies are dynamic, the qualitative paradigm offers an opportunity to thoroughly investigate dynamic processes.

Of importance to this study is the work of Punch (2005, p. 28), who notes that qualitative research not only uses non-numerical and unstructured data but also has typical research questions and methods which are more focused as the study progresses. Bell (2010, p. 15), further comments that researches adopting a qualitative perspective are more or less concerned with understanding individuals’ perceptions of the world. The above writer’s question whether scientific approach can be used when dealing with human beings,
thus this research probe the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.

Glen (2010), further notes the following three important things:

- Qualitative research investigates the why and how of decision-making.

- Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and reason that governs such behaviour.

- In qualitative research, smaller but focused samples are used than large random samples.

In this research of the challenges of gender equity, qualitative research approach was chosen because it deals with inductive logic in which themes and categories emerge through analysis of data generated by techniques such as, focus group discussions, videotaped interviews (McRoy, 2011) structured interview and open ended questionnaires were used.

Qualitative research was chosen because it deals with unquantifiables such as culture, language attitudes and behaviour. Even though all of these aspects of human life are loaded with philosophical and sociological problems, they are too consequential not to be objects of scholarly inquiry. According to McRoy (2011, p. 42), themes and categories of data are used. However, in this research some numbers were used for it was necessary to check on the numbers of males and females in the student governing bodies. Data analysis in qualitative approach includes assembling or organising field notes, cording and searching for categories or patterns.
Qualitative approaches have the advantage of flexibility, in-depth analysts and the potential to observe a variety of aspects of a social situation (Babbie, 1993). This is the case in the investigation of the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. The researcher also used the grounded theory.

This study used grounded theory which is a qualitative research method that was developed for studying the social phenomenon from perspective of symbolic interaction. It focuses on people, defines events and how they act according to their beliefs. According to Goulding (2005), grounded theory exposes behaviour of people in an organisation and their interaction which is highly symbolic. In this study the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of tertiary institutes in Zimbabwe derived a theory from the words and actions of the participants.

Using Grounded Theory, the researcher began her analysis when she entered the tertiary institutions. The researcher also dwelt on typical cases so as to draw meaning from childhood experiences in factors influencing participation in SGBs. Grounded theory suited very well with this study because enabled the researcher to develop a theory. The theory offers an explanation about the main concerns of the population of the substantive area. It also addressed how this concern of the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies can be resolved or processed. The method assisted the researcher to seek out and conceptualise the latent social patterns and structures of the area of interest. As the researcher used grounded theory, she gathered data pertaining to a substance using photographs, diaries documents and so forth. The data was open coded. The researcher wrote memos through out the entire process. Literature was read and integrated with the theory. Having explored the research approach, the researcher now turns to the design of the study.
3.6. The Design of the Study-Case Study

The study focused on the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions. The research is based on a case study of Harare Province. Yin (2009, p. 4); Swanborn (2010), define a case study as a detailed examination of one setting or a sample deposit event. Case studies focus on the contemporary phenomena by studying a single instance of phenomena. The research was focused on challenges being faced by focusing on contemporary phenomena and thus distinguishes the case study from historical research which focuses on the past phenomena. Gender issues remain a contemporary and tropical areas. According to Litchman (2013, p. 93), there are many different kinds of case studies and she gave example of Burket (2011), who reported on a case study of professional development of music teachers in rural areas. It is a case study because he concentrated on a particular group of individuals. In agreement with Keaney (2002), this study used a phenomenological case study design because of the need to study selected participants in their natural setting. Harare Province tertiary institutions were the setting. The researcher chose a case study for various reasons. Firstly, it helped the researcher to maintain a continous focus on the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies. Burton, Burdett and Jones (2011, p. 80), define a case study as an in-depth investigation of single person, group or even a community sharing the same view. Yin (2000), explains that case studies often employ analysis of documents, artefacts, interviews, observation and focus group discussions. The research employed open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This assumed triangulation of methods of data collection. The justification of employing a case study design in this research is that, the issue of gender is contemporary issues. This social phenomenon could only be understood by taking an intensive study of various problems of gender inequity that occurs in tertiary institutions in
Zimbabwe. To develop information that is accurate and interpretable on gender issues the researcher used qualitative research methodology drawn largely on a case study. In this study a single case study of tertiary institutions in Harare, allowed the researcher to obtain a wealth of information about challenges of gender inequality in Harare. This is in agreement with Coolran (2004:135), who purport that the study of more than one case, dilutes the overall analysis. In this research, multiple sources of data and institutions allowed for triangulation. Furthermore, the social context of Harare is the same; Harare constitutes a wide variety of populations. Some of whom are really of fanatic gender sensitivity and others are also traditional oriented. A third group is that of intellectuals who are committed to gender equity. In the traditional area, Harare has religious groups and other pressure groups. Therefore the researcher could not find a better context than Harare. Harare is a micro-cosm of the macro-population of the country and indeed of populations the world over. By confining to Harare, the study can be replicated to other world cities with the characteristics of Harare.

3.6.1 Disadvantages of a case study

A case study may have some shortcomings. For instance researches maybe biased to their observations as they tend to interpret things based on their own cultural background and beliefs. In this research, the researcher was aware of the biases that were likely to affect the research product; therefore she remained focused and objective. If not guarded some researchers may have their own pre conceived notions that affect the outcomes of the study. In this research of challenges of gender equity, the researcher strived to continually be as fair and open minded as possible in her observations and interviews with the subjects. With a case study, it is also very difficulty to check information with other sites. In this study, the choice of Harare was convenient because Harare has all aspects of The population of Zimbabwe, otherwise if a different setting was chosen, there was likely to be unreliable
results. A case study can also be long, difficult to conduct and produce a massive amount of documentation. To limit disorder in the data generated over a period of time, the researcher was strict in managing and organising her data systematically.

### 3.7 Population

According to Leechy and Omrod (2010), a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of the study. It is a group of element cases or individuals, subjects or criteria and to which we tend to generalise the results of the research (Rees, 2005). This study had two types of population. The targeted population consisted of all deans of students and students in the Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. The accessible population of this study consisted of eight tertiary institutions. Sixteen deans of students and one hundred and twenty students was the accessible population. Four universities, two teachers’ colleges, one polytechnic and one Agricultural institute. All tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe have issues of gender inequity. The researcher determined only Harare province because it includes all populations in Zimbabwe. The next section describes the sample of this study.

### 3.8 Sample

The sample of this study was derived from eight tertiary institutions. In them, all students who hold positions in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, deans of students and the first years and the final year students. First years, because they did have much attachment with the people involved in governance, they were likely to give objective answers. Final years were sampled because they would have lived at the campus a long time and had witnessed the trends of leadership in student governance bodies. According to Creswell (2002), a sample is that representative subgroup of the population that is chosen for direct participation. It is a specific unit of study drawn from the population. It is selected
through a sampling process in which it would represent the targeted population. The purpose of a sample is to gain information about the population. For this study, the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, the participants were selected through purposive sampling. The sampled participants were knowledgeable and informative about the conditions fostering the nature of gender representation at each institution. Purposive sampling is a process of selecting information rich participants for in-depth study. The number of participants was not determined prior to the research and the criteria of sufficiency and saturation was used to determine the number of participants to be interviewed in the study (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The point of saturation was reached when the researcher began to hear the same information being reported by additional participants while sufficiency was reached when enough people were interviewed to reflect the range of participants and issues for the study (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). In this study, ten deans of students were interviewed and out of the expected one hundred and sixty students, one hundred and twenty participated. The researcher now turns to the sampling procedure.

3.9 Sampling Procedure

The research used purposive sampling. It was an information rich in-depth study. The researcher used the maximum variation sampling technique. According to Creswell (2012), maximum variation sampling searches for cases or individuals who cover spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon one is studying. The researcher considered variation in perspectives between people of different social groups. Purposive sampling was used to select participants in the focus groups. Gall et al. (2007, p. 21), state that in purposive sampling the goal is to select cases that are likely to be rich in information with respect to the purpose of the study.
There were deans of students with different experiences and backgrounds in taking care of the students’ welfare. The students also were first year students, final year students and those involved in the student governing bodies of tertiary institutions. This helped the researcher to identify common themes evident across the sample.

Another type of sampling procedure is criteria sampling. It involves searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criteria. In this study, the sampled population had people of a particular life experience of either learning at a tertiary institute or being deans of students. Both males and females were purposively chosen to highlight their experiences on the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. These participants were willing to talk and were ready to provide rich information for the study. In purposive sampling the researcher does not only seek individuals but also sites that can best supply relevant information needed to answer the raised questions (Creswell, 2008, p. 214). In Purposive sampling, the selection is based on prior knowledge which suggests that the sample is representative or those selected have the needed information (Rao, 2000, p. 7). The researcher decided on whom and what to study. Purposive technique was used because it is a type of non probability sampling that was very effective. The goal was to select information rich participants. These knowledge experts in the form of Deans of Students and students in SRC were chosen. People were selected on the basis of particular purpose of experience in this case. It is the Deans of students who deal with students issues. Unlike the various techniques that can be used, the goal of purposive sample is not random sample units from and population that were of interest to the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutes. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to make generalisation from samples being studied. The purposive sampling in this research was held to the objectives of the study. The articulate informants advanced the research for better, than if the participant were randomly sampled. Thus in this study,
purposive sampling was robust, for it was fundamental to the quality of data, gathered for reliability and competence of the informants was ensured through purposive sampling. The next section therefore, discusses the instrumentation.

3.10 **Instrumentation**

The instruments used in this research were open-ended questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Data generation is an essential component when conducting research. Healm (2012), observes that a data collection can be an easy task but collecting credible data is not an easy task. Thus, the above mentioned instruments were vital to collect credible data for this research on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies. These instruments allowed the participants maximum control, they also allowed the participants to use their own way of defining the world. The participants narrated their stories.

3.10.1 **Interviews**

Interviews are very critical in the gathering of data in qualitative studies. This study used semi-structured interviews.

**Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Deans of students. In this research the interviews were conducted face-to-face. Shingleton and Straight (2004), suggest that an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with specific, purpose of obtaining relevant information. Using semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility. In this research the interviews pursued issues of particular significance related to the topic. According to Gray (2006), the use of semi-structured interviews is congruent with grounded theory; the interviews explore new paths which were not initially considered. Thus the research was not limited but probed deeper into given situations.
The researcher can ask more detailed questions about an individual or can also explain and rephrase questions depending on the type of participants. Unlike the focus group interview, Creswell (2008), alludes that individual interviews allow participants freedom to describe their world and reality. In this study, the researcher adapted the formulation of questions including the terminology to fit the background, position and education levels of the participants. The researcher aimed to concentrate on topical issues and not specific questions hence utilisation of semi-structured interviews. Thus, the researcher got a diversity of ideas from the participants. The answers were provided by the participants during the interviews. According to Denzin (2000), semi-structured interviews offer research flexibility in gathering information from participants. Furthermore, people are usually more willing to talk than to write. The researcher used a tape recorder with the concert of the participants so as to capture the exact words from the participants’ mouth and also used probes when interviewing to find out secret or hidden information on the challenges of gender equity on student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary institutions.

However, in the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher was in control of the conversation and the sentiments to the service of their research interest. The interview guide served as a basic checklist during the interview to ensure that all the relevant topics are covered (Pition, 2002). According to Thomas (2009), an interview is a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them. The information maybe facts, opinions, attitudes or any combination of these. According to Kings and Horrocks (2010), the purpose of an interview is to find out what is in someone’s mind. According to Briggs (2000, p. 99), it involves one person asking another person a list of questions about a carefully selected topic. All of them concur that it is construction of a rich description of the varied and multi-dimensional world of interviews. A semi-structured interview is carried out
when the interviewer has worked out a set of questions whose order she or he is free to modify based on perceptions of what seems to be appropriate in the context of the conversation (Burton, Brundnett & Jones, 2013). The answers provided by the participants during the interviews were recorded accordingly and transcribed after each interview. The most common data collecting methods in grounded theory are in-depth interviews (Goulding, 2005). In grounded theory behaviour involves various forms of communication both verbal and non-verbal. Barret (2007), has it that qualitative research seeks to understand the phenomenal world through study of events, actions and interactions. This study used the structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer requires more focused information and asks more specific questions to gain information. Cobbetta, (2003), explains semi-structured interviews as:The order in which various topics were dealt with and the wording of the questions were left to the interviewer’s discretion. Within each topic the interviewer was free to conduct the conversation as she felt fit to ask questions. She asked for clarification if the answer is not clear and prompted participants to explain further if necessary and to establish her own style of conversation. In this research of finding out the challenges and perceptions of the issue of gender equity in student governance bodies, a set of questions whose order were modified were worked out. The justification of using Open ended interviews in this research was that the researcher was in charge of the question. The face to face interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to enter into another persons’ world. Through these interviews there was possibly of having consensus views clarified. The interviews were flexible; however the major issues which the researcher was investigating were the thrust of the interview questions. Quality information which is in-depth was gathered in a natural setting. It allowed verification as the researcher triangulated the interviews. These interviews allowed the researcher to learn the complexities of participants from their point of view. The interview guide provided, helped when
interviewing different views and kept the interactions focused. The guide was the checklist to ensure that relevant topics were covered.

3.10.2 Challenges of semi-structured interviews

In using semi-structured interviews there is a challenge in using research assistant. Newton (2010), asserts that comparability of data maybe different from interview to interview. Therefore, in this research, researcher assistants were not involved on the interviews. They were involved in focus group discussions. The researcher interviewed all the deans of students by herself. Another challenge, according to Corbetta (2003), is the large amounts of raw data which are difficult to compile. It is also a challenge to listen to the interviews with eyes and ears so as to concentrate and capture the essence of the participant. Writing notes and tape recording were effective measures of mitigating the problem. Another challenge, according to Muijis (2011), is that some participants are likely to give answers they feel the interviewer wants to hear. The researcher incorporated the issue of trustworthiness because different perceptions may distort the facts if not captured correctly. The researcher obtained information through careful motivation of the participants by holding of head and use of facial expression. The researcher made appointments and agreed on the convenient dates with deans of students.

3.10.3 The researcher as a tool

In relation to the above, this section looks at the researcher as a tool. In this qualitative research approach, the researcher was the major data collecting instrument. According to Litchman (2013), the researcher is the key person in obtaining data from participants. The researcher made the atmosphere conducive for a flow of information from the participants by establishing good rapport. The researcher interpreted and translated data generated by participants through interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended questionnaires into
themes and theories. According to Litchman (2013, p. 25), the researcher has an optical role to play in the qualitative research, the researcher asks questions, conducts and analyses. The researcher decides who to study and what to study. The researcher is the conduct through which information is gathered and filtered. It is imperative then that the researcher has experience and understanding about the problem. To cater for bias the researcher used audio-tapes in interviews, to compare with field notes. All the questions to be asked were written down into a book in order to refer and make sense at a later stage.

3.10.4 Open-ended questionnaires

An open-ended questionnaire was used to obtain information from first year and final year students. The questionnaire, interrogated the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. Open forms or unstructured questions called for free response in the participants’ own words. According to Ghoshal (2006), open-ended questions maybe designed to trap into a richer view of perceptions and attitudes that is possible with closed questions. Among the questions to the students in the SRC was a question which demanded the typical case of individual. The questionnaire was chosen because it is easier to construct, cheaper to administer and useful to collect large amounts of data. According to Whitehead (2005), there is coverage of a wide geographical area at minimal cost. The justification for the open ended questionnaire is that there was room for the participants to choose responses and how to present them. There is flexibility. For example participants can give examples. The word open suggests that there is plenty of room to manoeuvre. Another advantage over interviews that it allows the participants to say what he or she cannot say face to face with the researcher. There is no direct interpersonal relation e.g attitudes therefore are is free to express content in any way he or she feels.
3.10.5 Focus group discussions

This study used focus group discussions to extract valuable information for the challenges for gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. Chisaka, Mamvuto, Matiure, Mukabera and Zireva (2013), define a focus group discussion as a group discussion in which six to twelve participants talk about a relevant topic under the guidance of the researcher who will play the role of a moderator. Bless and Smith (2000, p. 154), describe a focus group discussion as a “semi-structural group interview or a group depth interview conducted by a skilled facilitator”. In this case, participants share views and discuss ideas about the topic of interest. Focus group interviews served to assist the participants to re-evaluate a previous position or statement that is in need of amplification, qualification, amendment or contradiction (Litchman, 2013, p. 299). The primary aim of focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group (Krueger, & Casey, 2009). Thus it also served as a source of validation.

The focus groups allowed discussion on a particular topic and they helped in facilitating the collection of data from many participants in the study with each group having six members. The informal group situation comprises largely of unstructured nature of questions which will by no means allow participants to freely disclose their views and attitudes as might be in interviews Chisaka et al. (2013, p. 12).

The face-to-face involvement ensures that participants discuss relevant issues on a given topic Dayman and Holloway (2002) say “six members is about the right size for most research purpose associated with traditional focus groups, large enough to provide a variety of perspectives but small enough not to become disorderly. An interview guide was used to make sure that all matters or issues were discussed. One focus group discussion was tape
recorded. This helped the researcher to have an insight on the challenges faced by stakeholders in addressing gender equity. Each group had a mixture of both males and females, as a result, gender balance was considered. Denzin and Lincolin (2000, p. 650), have it that, focus group discussions can be thought of as a collective interviews in which it is hoped that all the participants through their interaction may provide data and some insights which may not be revealed through interviews with individuals. Fen (2001), gives another advantage of focus group discussion as that, it is a natural way of collecting data and participants speak their views in a natural setting. In a focus group discussion sensitive issues can be discussed more comfortably than in interview sessions. Cresswell, 1998, p. 120), posits that this could be due to the fact that participants develop confidence due to numbers. The students were involved in the focus groups. The students had different encounters on the challenges of gender equity and focus groups become a chance to share experiences with others. Focus groups enabled interactions among study participants to enhance data quality. According to Krathwohl (2004, p. 295), details and experiences of one individual may stimulate the other.

However, the focus group discussion approach had its own limitations. Alexis (2010), explains that focus group discussions are not as efficient as interviews in covering maximum depth on particular issues. Also members in a group setting might be reluctant to openly share their views in a group. There is also bound to be that moderator leads a discussion into reaching a certain conclusion (Alexis 2010, p. 79). Furthermore, if focus groups are not properly constituted, a few individuals may dominate the group proceedings at the expense of others. In the above view the researcher organised the focus groups’ prior discussions ground rules. The importance of utilizing a focus group discussion is that it allowed collecting of information at once. Focus group discussion was alive, it allowed sharing of ideas. There were social factors, political factor management factors which helped to bring out the best
from the discussion. The group members were sampled purposively and each participant was an expect and was well informed about the issue of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary institutes. There was equity among the members and the ground rules suggested that there be no rejection. Justification of focus group research in this study is that it became the best means of generating data pertaining controversial issues. One can not the rich information by interviewing a person one by one. Focus group discussion allowed debate and argument and the researcher obtained various premises upon which to make judgement and decision upon. In all the focus group discussions, the researcher was a quest, chairperson or a secretary. The researcher had abandon time to collect data and there was opportunity and freedom to select data.

3.10.6 Pilot Study.

Pilot testing was completed on a sample of one institution. The pilot testing assisted the researcher to make modifications to the questionnaire based on the educators’ “written and verbal comments. Pilot testing of the questionnaire has to indicate that the questions were fairly easy to understand and no modifications to the language were necessary. Pilots are defined by Yin (2011, p. 37), as aiming to “help test and refine one or more aspects of a final study – for example, its design, fieldwork procedures, data collection instruments or analysis plans”. In this study, the interview schedule, questionnaire and focus group interviews instruments were pre-tested on 12 randomly selected participants in order to discuss the length of the instrument, the format, and the clarity and appropriateness of the wording of the questions, which resulted in the revision or removal of some questions regarded as ambiguous. This was done to check that all questions and instructions were clear. Items that did not yield suitable data were also eliminated. This trial was a forerunner of the main data collection and was a research training process. The researcher aimed at reducing ambiguities as far as possible. In this research the study pilot tested the instruments. The interviews were
tested randomly selected participants and questionnaires on 2nd randomly selected respondents. One focus group discussion was done. This was done in circle to discuss the length of the instruments, the format and the clarity and appropriate of wording the questions regarded as ambiguous. This was done to check that all questions and instructions are clear. Items that did not yield suitable data e.g the demographics were removed from all instruments. This pilot testing was a forerunner of the main data collection and the main data collection and was a training process. Although the group used for pilot study was random sampled the people were knowledgeable of the variables understudy so that they were able to make judgement. Nyadire Teacher’s College where the researcher works was used for pilot study. The respondents were given an opportunity to comment on the research instruments.

3.11 Data Generation Procedures

The researcher collected data through open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher sought permission to carry out the study from the Faculty of Education (ZOU). The researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. The researcher also sought informed consent from the selected interviewees. All the participants to be interviewed were fully explained to on the topic, purpose of research and that they were free to withdraw from the interview sessions if they felt so. Gender distribution was considered on the interviews so as to avoid gender bias. A consent form was given to each participant to sign before commencing the interviews as a sign of agreeing to take part in the study. The researcher did not abuse the tape record for other use except for the research purpose. In this research a recorder was available to take notes of the proceedings. The interviews were transcribed to capture all what was said during the interview session. In qualitative research data analysis and data collection was done concurrently. Efforts were made to create good report with participants to ensure that they respond freely on a relaxed atmosphere.
3.12 **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis consisted of examining, categorising, tabulating or recombining evidence to address the initial proposing of a study. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously as an on-going process. Based on the information gathered through open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher identified major themes of categories within. According to Taylor (2011, p. 158), research questions are very important. They derive all the processes of imperial research from data gathering to reaching conclusions. In the research, the Data was arranged on the basis of common emerging themes and the themes were derived from research questions. The data from focus groups, questionnaires and interviews were presented by means of narratives. Analysis of data was narrative with some of the responses from the participants presented as was said verbally. According to Burton (2011, p. 147), presented in narrative, the qualitative research provides tones and a means of helping the reader to connect with the research that pure numerical data is unable to convey. By using quotations from interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, depth and greater meaning is added to data. Burton (2011, p. 147), concludes that qualitative data by its very nature is more open to ambiguity and it requires the identification of emergent key themes for it to be organised, collected and interpreted. Responses are likely to be unique to each individual respondent so the researcher needs to be alive to the potential patterns that might exist and be aware of the opportunities for categorisation. According to Horbeg (2003, p. 65), qualitative research integrates the opportunities of organising, analysing and interpreting data and call the entire process “Data analysis”.

Data analysis in qualitative research has a number of characteristics which were seen in this research. Data generation and data analysis occurred simultaneously. Alongside field notes
The researcher generated analytical memos. These include notes about probing ambiguous and ambivalent statements and also notes on the pursuit of recurring issues.

Qualitative data analysis is a vigorous process, in this research there was constant comparison, and there was systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and reflecting on data to gain an understanding on the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies.

The generated information went through a rigorous process. When all the scripts were collected, line by line coding was used on transcript that were thick in description. The researcher used key words in the in formats own words. Notes were written on the margins of the open ended questionnaires in form of memoring. The interviews recorded in an exercise book were read and other data was classified and categorized repeatedly allowing deeper immersion. Similar codes were grouped together and these grouping are called chunking. Codes and categories were compared for similarities and differences through the techniques of constant comparison. Through the process memos were written. Major codes categories were explained and a theory was generated.

3.13 Ethical and Legal Considerations

Research ethics refers to the type of communication the researcher is supposed to have with participants. In this research the researcher will have an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of participants (Creswell, 2012). This implies that when conducting research with human beings, the researcher has to consider the scientific and moral values relating to her research. Fieldman (2007), has it that respecting people’s humanity and dignity even if it means that information may be lost is of great importance to make truth known. In carrying out a research study concerned with the wellbeing of the participants, the researcher
sought informed consent from relevant stakeholders (Fieldman, 2007). After receiving permission, the researcher introduced herself, explained the topic and purpose of study to the participants. The participants were informed of the researcher’s intention to publicise the research. This means the researcher avoided exploitation of participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Their names remain anonymous (Stephen, 2009), states that real names were to be attached to write ups or the focus groups for confidentiality. The purpose of the study was explained verbally by the researcher and a letter of consent that spells out the aim of the research was issued.

Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were respected in this study, (Nolan, 2006, p. 104.) Privacy in this regard implies that no information was forced from the participant and if they did not wish to give more information their rights were respected. Confidential documents that include video, transcribed interviews, additional notes were locked away for safety reasons. Thus, confidentiality of the participants was taken into account. Also, no information was made known to the third person without the consent of the participants (Nolan, 2006).

According to Madson (2012), the subjects have the choice to participate in any research. The researcher made it clear that they must participate from their free will without putting themselves into a compromising situation. The researcher remained honest and accountable when dealing with participants. The researcher acted diligently by keeping the information in good care and only using it in the study and not for other reasons. Literature has also revealed that from an ethical point of view, research should not only avoid harm but also assure that its purpose is to do good (Israel and Hay, 2006).

The methods used by the researcher were not to cause harm to participants. The researcher ensured that there was no deception, coercion, invasion of privacy and breach of
confidentiality. The findings were kept undisturbed or manipulated and not to serve untruthful, personal or institutional end. The researcher used obtained information which was only used for the purpose of this research only.

In this research the participants were given a summary of research findings on request. In summary this study was to abide by:

• Gaining informed consent.

• Ensuring anonymity with respect to individuals and institutions involved.

• Minimising harm to all research stakeholders.

• Acting in a truthful manner.

• Acting in a socially sensitivity manner (Kurasha, 2013).

3.14 Trustworthiness

The researcher upheld the issue of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, according to La Blanca (2010), is a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound if and when the argument made based on the results is strong. Sheton and Guba (2006) observe that trustworthiness is established when findings are as closely related as possible and reflect the meanings as described by the participants. According to Gary (2006, p. 305), a study is trustworthy if and only if the reader of the research reports judges it to be so. Trustworthiness encompasses triangulation. Triangulation involves identification of various sources of data and means of gathering them by the researcher. Triangulation is referred to be the validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form these or categories in the study (Creswell 2000). The source of data and
methods will enable the writer to gather data based on differing view points of a different subject and to cross check those data.

To minimise using one specific method, this research used open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather data. This was done so as to check the findings yielded by instruments were consistent as such the authenticity of the findings of the study was increased. Trustworthiness encompasses issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (‘O’ Leavy, 2004). Credibility is all about the internal validity. It answers that, has the researcher coreded accurately.

3.14.1 Credibility

Credibility was enhanced through triangulation. Madson (2012), assert that in qualitative research the term credibility relates to the vividness and faithfulness of the descriptions of phenomena. In this research, the researcher tried by all means to use her own words to guide the theory formulation. Credibility was assured by using the suitable data collection tools. The researcher engaged member checking for credibility (Shenton, 2004, p. 305). The gathered information was then cross checked; through in the interviews and focus groups of this study, the participants were invited to check the accuracy of the information as recorded by the researcher.

3.14.2 Dependability

Another criterion is dependability. The researchers assessed the extent to which proper research practices were followed. In this study, the use of focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews enhanced dependability. The way the study was described in detail to enhance dependability. Such a detailed description allowed the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices were followed. The use of an ‘inquiry audit’ allows reviews to examine both the process and the research for consistency.
(Leedy and Ormand 2010). A permanent record of the original data for analysis and researchers’ comment was kept. This allowed others to examine the thought process involved in the research and also enabled them to assess the accuracy of the conclusions.

The study was described in detail showing all the steps taken for any reader to access if the steps, methods and procedures were dependable. One of the research assistance in this was a doctoral learner at Tanzania Open University and she assisted in assessing the processes involved to reach the conclusion.

3.14.3 Transferability

According to Shenton (2004), transferability measures the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other situations in the research. In this research it was established by extending the types of sites and context in which the phenomena was investigated. This study has described the characteristics of both the participants and tertiary institutes; the data collection methods used as well as the time frame within which data was collected. This was done to enable the readers to assess the extent to which the findings may be true of people in other settings. Gray (2006, p. 3005), argues that the issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research should not be linked to the truth and value but rather to trustworthiness.

3.14.4 Confirmability

In this study the findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of informants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. In order to enhance confirmability, the researcher offered a self-critical reflective analysis of the methodology used in research. The self-reflection created an open and honest narrative that was aimed to resonate well with the readers.
3.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the qualitative approach undertaken to do this study. The philosophy of the research to be used is interpretive. The participants, sample and sampling procedures were justified. The research methods employed to collect data were open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The next chapter will analyse, present, interpret and discuss results. It will be discussed according to the research questions raised in Chapter one and the literature review in Chapter two.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three gave an outline of the methodology, research design and data collection instruments used in the research. The researcher collected data from deans of students, students in SRC and general students. Chapter four presents’ data. The major thrust of the research was the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutions. The chapter was presented according to the four research questions which are as follows:

1. To what extent is gender equity evident in the governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions?

2. How do factors surrounding tertiary institution in Zimbabwe influence female participation in student governing bodies?

3. Why is gender equity important in tertiary institutions?

4. What strategies can be put in place to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies?

Presentation of findings is in the following arrangement. Firstly, each tertiary institute involved in the research was described and explained in terms of location, type and organisation. Secondly, the characteristics of the participants were explained, so as to get general understanding of the problem in relation to the area studied and the characteristics of participants. Thirdly, the chapter responded to the four research questions. All interviews conducted were tape recorded, transcribed verbatim and the researcher read and re-read the transcribed work until patterns began to emerge.
4.2 Tertiary Institutions Included in the Research Study

This chapter provides data that were captured during the site visits to each of the eight colleges.

Institution A

It is a government institution, under the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. It is located in Chitungwiza along Mangwende Road. It was established in 1981. It specialises in training primary school teachers in the ECD and general course departments. Its mission is to educate primary school teachers with scientific and technical knowledge, skills and attributes of commitment, integrity, honesty and transparency necessary for professional growth that meet international bench marks.

Institution B

It is a private institution under the Roman Catholic Church. It was established in 1999. It has multiple campuses around the country including Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Chinhoyi. But its headquarters is in Harare’s suburb of Hatfield. It offers degree programmes in Faculty of Sciences and Arts and many short courses in the Commercials and Humanities.

Institution C

It is Zimbabwe’s largest technical college. It is located in Harare’s central business district. The institution offers various programmes on both full time and part time basis. It is administered by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. The institution opened its doors in 1964 in the then Salisbury during the Rhodesia era and has over the years grown to become one of the leading tertiary institutions administered by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe. The qualifications for enrolment criteria include Ordinary
level Mathematics as a compulsory subject. Holders of other qualifications such as Advanced level and National Certificates are also enrolled for different programmes.

**Institution D**

It is a government institution, under the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development and was founded in 1982 as the only technical teachers’ training college in Zimbabwe after the phasing out of Technical Teachers courses at the then Gweru Teachers’ College. The college trains secondary school teachers in both academic and technical subjects and has a capacity to enrol over two thousand students (Theory of Education and Teaching Practice) and Professional and Contemporary Studies (National Strategic Studies, Professional Studies and Health Education). It has also a Technical and Vocational Department with the following sections: Technical Graphics, Wood Technology, Agriculture, Mechanical Engineering, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Clothing and Textile Technology, Information Technology and Building Technology.

**Institution E**

The University E in Africa is a private institution established in 2002 and it was granted a Charter by the Government of Zimbabwe in 2004. Its main campus is located in Marondera, 80km South East of Harare. It is currently operating from its second campus in Harare at two sites; in Mt Pleasant and 188 Sam Munjoma Street, Avondale. The University mission is to provide quality tuition, research and service to the community to empower students for leadership and developmental roles. The institution is guided by its core values which include gender sensitive, equity and diversity, academic freedom, creativity and innovation, integrity and honesty, social responsibility and transparency and accountability.
It seeks to enhance women capacity through the provision of higher education, which enables them to fulfil political, social and leadership roles. The University considers the empowerment of women to be critical for sustainable democratic governance, economic growth and enhanced well-being of the general populace. It is the only women’s university in the region set up to directly tackle the problem of women’s access to university education. Its enrolment of 85% women and 15% men, the majority of whom are over 25 years of age, is proving to be better than traditional approaches of affirmative action. It is a contribution towards the 50/50 gender participation ratio as advocated through the SADC Protocol on Gender to address the historical and culturally engrained gender imbalances.

**Institution F**

It opened its doors in 1952. The university has ten faculties offering a wide variety of degree programmes and many specialist research centres. English is the language of instruction.

**Institution G**

This is a unique institution of higher learning offering Open and Distance Learning to students in Zimbabwe, in the region and in the international arena. It started off as an offshoot of the University of Zimbabwe and has since grown into a fully-fledged University. It is a multi-disciplinary and inter-faculty institution of higher learning offering Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. It also offers degree and non-degree programmes through distance teaching and open learning to youth and adult learners. It is unique in that it has no learning structures of its own. It made history by having the first female Vice Chancellor in Zimbabwe.
Institution H

The college was established in 1950 and is located 27km from Harare. The college trains professionals to attain Diplomas and Higher Diplomas in Agriculture. The college is administered by the Government of Zimbabwe under the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development. A maximum of 45 male students were admitted annually but since 2009 only 30 male and 15 female students are being enrolled.

Table 1: Data on Deans of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years at Institute</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as Dean of Students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 The Extent of Gender Equity in Student Governing Bodies

The extent of gender equity to the tertiary institutes of Harare is very low in favour of men. Most of the Deans of students indicated that they have been working for the colleges or universities for more than 15 years. From their explanation, they were all promoted into the post after having worked for the institution in other departments. This gave the researcher the view that the administration needs more time to get to know a person before appointing them as a Dean of Students. It would appear as one is trusted after having worked for an institution for a longer time.

On the question of the trends of SRC president sex for the past five years, most of the college participants indicated that men had the highest percentage. However, only one tertiary
institute indicated that its constitution, upholds that the president should be a female. The response of one of the deans of students was

This university has no trends as such, because our constitution clearly mentions that the SRC president post is reserved specifically for a female.

Some of the answers given were;

*Eeee, for the past five years, there haven’t been a female SRC president.*

*Most of the candidates have been men.*

*Females seem to be not confident to partake this post.*

*Males have been dominating the SRC presidency.*

Therefore, most of the deans of students indicated that the trend of presidency in most institutions have been males for the past five years.

However, some deans of students and students failed to give a definition which includes men. Some of them had an understanding that gender equity was there to only advantage females.

On the enrolment aspect, all institutions ranged from 2000 to 5000 students with the polytechnic being the highest in enrolment. At the polytechnic ¾ were males. They have full time and part time students. There were 16 departments at the polytechnic. On the trend of SRC president, most institutes indicated that the male sex was dominant as presidents. One polytechnic Dean explained that for the past five years they have never had a female president because of probably the ratio in numbers. Therefore, the probability is very low of a female to be a president since the ratio is 7, 5: 2, 5. One university dean of students also mentioned the opposite for she said females were 85% of the total population since the university was formed first and foremost to promote women. From the interviews with the deans of students, questionnaires for SRC and focus group discussions the most mentioned governed bodies which were not SRC were articulation of Christian Union, debate, choir,
drama, sporting activities and their purposes were explained. Most deans of students indicated that they believed gender equity existed in their institutions.

On the issue of steps and procedures taken for one to be in SRC, all the deans of students interviewed, indicated that there were clear procedures. Most deans were not able to avail their constitution and this showed the researcher that issues of gender were not taken with the seriousness they deserve. Only one dean was able to avail the constitution physically as she explained that;

This constitution shows who is eligible and who is not, some programmes run for a year and some for a term so, one should be there for a year and above in the institution. It is the students themselves who lead the elections and selection. The constitution also clearly explains that: leadership is not on the basis of sex. Thus we give them basic education before they campaign

Another dean explained that;

The student should be of high moral values and character which is above others. The student should have paid up fees, be disciplined. In this college the student must be in the third or second year.

Another explanation by a dean at a certain college was that;

“If the president voted was male then the vice automatically has to be female so as to balance the presidency post”.

A detailed account was given by one of the deans;

Yes, really, the administration announces that there are going to be elections three weeks before the election date. Students are given time to know each other before voting. The administration clearly explains that there are student politics, Therefore, no poster, no partisan and no slogans. Each nomination must be supported by more than 50 students before being elected. Most tertiary institutions have got the ballot boxes. The principal and Dean’s office also scrutinise the students before they campaign. One dean of students explained that we very grateful that we house Z.E.C. ballot boxes and we asked for permission to use them to quote our elections are a mirror of the national voting system. We have created voting papers and use our name lists as voter’s rolls.
At one institution a detailed explanation of the election process was given

The elections are conducted on the same day. It is done on a Friday afternoon. Every voter must hold a college I.D. all the voting is done transparently in front of all the students. The ballots are counted there. However, participants did not make noise about it though they would have known the one with a larger percentage of votes. Participants waited for the principal to announce on a Monday and everyone is sworn into the SRC.

All the above details indicated that all tertiary institutions had clear election procedures. Though they differ in their approaches, the major issues for example, announcing, campaigning, voting are the same. However, some institutions were now having ballot boxes and using the Z.E.C. system because they want to be fair and objective. On the aspect of people’s attitude on being led by a male or female, most deans of students explained that, the sex of a leader can affect the people being led. One Dean of students explained that this is attributed to culture which is coming from a male dominance stance. Furthermore, even the women themselves are very comfortable to be led by men. One female Dean explained that, “People still look down upon women they do not give them the respect they deserve”

Perceptions on women’s leadership styles

On the question, on whether female leadership differed from males, all the deans of students agreed that there were differences, though some described them as slight differences. One Dean explained that females had a female touch which is very motherly and wanted to see things done “the female presidency they grab the bull by its horn and they live no stone unturned” other attributes mentioned were that they have an understanding of the people’s problems they honour deadlines. One female dean mentioned that, from experience on issues of corruption nationally, women are not easily bribed. However, some Deans mentioned the issue of females as not being flexible. Maybe they want to prove that they are in control.
Some Deans of students explained that women lead from grape vine. “They are gossipers and this makes them to be not objective, they can take action from hearsay. They also jump to protocols when they want to report issues”. One ODL Dean gave example that these females are very democratic however, they face time problems because they have other tasks to be done at home. One of the Deans explained that one has to be respected as a female for her to be voted in.

Most institutions indicated that they ensure gender equity at their institutions. One Dean of students mentioned that besides the SRC they were trying to show students that females were also capable. She explained that most of the drivers at the institute were now females. This showed there was progress in on issues of gender equity at that institution. This showed that there was progress in gender equity. She further explained that;

“In sports we have introduced soccer and karate we have showed the girl must participate in all activities. The Principle supports gender equity, however, in practice there is subtle discrimination”.

Men have attitude they can say “zvamadzimai” meaning female issues, They do not trust and have faith in females’ abilities and capabilities.

One dean of students explained that, “there is not much going on but college values female decisions because the female President enter the senior management council meeting.”

On the opinion on few females in student governing bodies, sentiments like the females themselves, do not complain were uttered; one dean said “they are not ready to take up the leadership post. One male Dean said “we know the gospel gender equity but at times it’s hard to practice due to our cultural background.
Most students indicated in the focus group that they donot think gender equity exists in their college. Other governing bodies were explained. One female dean explained that, “there are other governing bodies besides SRC, these include national, and international bodies in the sporting activities. “The steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies were explained. The most popular one was that the principal announced and explains the purpose of each body through the deans of students. Students register with the dean’s office for then to campaign. The dean of students can sift other names which he finds not suitable. Females holding post of food committee among the reasons given on why did they choose that position? One female said, “I like cooking and maintaining order in the kitchen.”

She also mentioned that she sees as if students prefer males as their leaders. She also explained that females are jealous of each other. They would rather vote for the opposite sex than to have other female’s upgraded. Probably because females are by nature competitive.

Among the areas of effectiveness exhibited by females was the area food. Another female student explained that she is in the Ministry of Religion. She chose the post because it is linked to her subject area Religious and Moral Education. Most students explained that the effectiveness of a leader is not influenced by gender.

4.3.1 Types of student governance bodies

From the study it was gathered that students at A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H, participate in institutional or national student governance bodies. However, from the responses, female students were more participative in clubs. The clubs that were frequently mentioned by the participants were Peer Network, Poetry, Debate clubs, Sports coaching and the Scripture Union. The participants explained that they preferred participating in clubs because they helped them upgrade their social and economic welfare in their learning institutions. The
study also established that more female students were participating in clubs as compared to governance organisations because clubs did not require much time and commitment from them, they needed more time to have some domestic chores. Nevertheless, according to the definition of student governance used in this study, clubs do not qualify as student governance organisations. The study participants from G University understood the SRC as being responsible for the day-to-day running of students’ affairs. Some of its responsibilities mentioned were negotiating with the members of the administration regarding the food they were served in the Dining Hall, prices for commodities in the institutions’ tuck-shop, tuition fees, accommodation and entertainment of students among others issues. The participants also explained that members of the SRC and the Student Union Parliament were invited to sit in the University Senate and Board meetings which are the administrative bodies responsible for the running of the affairs of the institution.

In the study, the researcher gathered that most colleges were run by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and Development of Zimbabwe. The ministry governs these institutions affairs using the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) Act (2006) (Chapter 25, p. 27). The researcher observed that the Act does not address issues relating to student governance. The only student governance structure found at these three colleges is the SRC. Participants from these colleges were of the view that the role of the SRC is to act as the mediator between students and members of administration. The participants said some of the issues the SRC addresses in their institutions also have to do with tuition fees, accommodation or their academic needs.
4.3.2 National student governance organisations

The study also established that students participated in national student governance organisations. The national student governance organisations were categorised as those that serve in both colleges and universities. The study established that, the organisations that deal with students in colleges only are the Zimbabwe Teachers’ Sport Association (ZITUSA) and the Zimbabwe Student Teachers’ Union (ZITSU). The participants mentioned that ZITUSA was an organisation which organises sports events for all the colleges in Zimbabwe. Some of the activities include budgeting for the sports tournaments, planning of venues and accounting for the participants who will include all the students from all the Colleges in Zimbabwe. The other student organisation which was mentioned in the study is ZITSU. The participants alluded that the organisation represents the social, academic and political interests of students in all the colleges in Zimbabwe.

The research also found out that the national student governance organisations serving in both colleges and universities are Zimbabwe Congress of Student Union (ZICOSU) and the Zimbabwe National Student Union (ZINASU). The purpose of these two organisations was to protect the rights and interests of students in all the tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. The study also established that the Provincial Executive for ZINASU and ZICOSU comprised of the Presidents of the SRCs from all the tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. It was also established that the National Executive for ZINASU had eleven members who were elected into office every two years. The National Executive was responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation. The representation of females in these organisations is very low.
as was established by the ratio of female students in the organisation as indicated by answers on the questionnaire.

The Zimbabwe Congress of Student Union (ZICOSU) was formed before ZINASU was formed. However, the organisations serve the same purposes. The role of ZICOSU and ZINASU includes lobbying for students’ political economic and social rights across all the tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. ZINASU is also a member of the Southern African Student Union (SASU), the International Student Union (ISU) and the All African Student Union (AASU) which are all student union bodies that represent the interests of students at regional and international levels. The study will also examine the female participation in these governing bodies.

4.3.3.1 Student participation in SGB

From the responses, D Teachers’ College has 1(11.1%) female and 8 (88.9%) male students in the SRC. At A Teachers’ College, out of the nine members of the SRC, 4 (44.8%) are female and 5 (55.2%) are male students. The research findings also revealed that C Polytechnic has 2 female students in the SRC. The Electoral Committee at B University had 2 (20%) female and 8(80%) of male representation. This shows that females are not actively participating in Electoral Committees. Therefore most institutions are still struggling with gender equity in SGB.

4.3.3.2 Female students and positions in SGB

The female Electoral Committee members at G University explained that their roles were contributing in the general planning and organising of the election of students into the Student Union bodies. The participants also alluded that the position of the Chairperson and
Vice Chairperson of the Electoral Committee, which are influential positions, were held by male students. Most of the participants also remarked that male students were taking lead roles in the budget planning of the students’ electoral processes at B University. Furthermore, the study gathered that one female student from D Teachers’ College occupied the position of the President. A female student occupied the position of Vice President at B University and one female student from A Teachers’ College occupied the position of Secretary General. The researcher learned that most female students occupy positions of less influence. The study gathered that only two female students were occupying positions as Sports Officers. Two female students were in the food departments which are regarded as female’s domain. In addition, one female student was in the Entertainment Office at C Polytechnic College. These research findings are outlined in the tables below.

A stands for males whereas B stands for females

Table 3: Positions assumed by female students in the SRC at A College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Officer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Sports Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Positions held by male and female students in the SRC at B Teachers’ College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment Officers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Positions held by male and female students in the SRC at C University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker of Parliament</td>
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<td>President</td>
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<td>Finance Officer</td>
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### Table 6: Positions held by male and female students in the SRC at D Polytechnic College

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Sports Officer</td>
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<td>Food Officer</td>
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<td>Legal Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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### Table 7: Positions assumed by female students in the SRC at E College

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Secretary General</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td>Food Officer</td>
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<td>Entertainment Officer</td>
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<td>Sports Officer</td>
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<td>Vice Sports Officer</td>
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<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
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Table 8: Positions held by male and female students in the SRC at F Teachers’ College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Vice President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment Officers</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>Sports Officer</td>
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<td>Food Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice entertainment officer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice Sport Officer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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</table>

Table 9: Positions held by male and female students in the SRC at G University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Speaker of Parliament</td>
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<td>President</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
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<td>Secretary General</td>
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<td>Entertainment Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Officer</td>
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From the interviews the researcher learnt that one female student occupied the post of Vice President at B University. The participant explained that her roles included managing the SRC activities when the President is absent from the institution and assisting the President in decision-making. In all the colleges the percentage of males occupying positions in SGB was above 50%.

4.3.3.3 Female students in food related issues

The study established that female students prefer taking role as Food Representatives in the SRC. The data pointed out that female students from Polytechnic College, C Teachers’ and
H. College have roles of food officers. One participant from D Teachers’ College explained that her role is to pass students’ complaints to their kitchen captain. 60% of the population had females on the food representative post. The participant further explained that if the matter was not resolved she would refer it to members of administration who are in charge of students’ affairs. Another participant claimed she held regular meetings with students so as to keep up to date with the students’ needs concerning their dining hall food.

The study also pointed out that matters considered during these meetings were whether or not the food was well-cooked, distributed at the right time or in sufficient quantities. A participant from C Polytechnic explained that at some point she was discontent with the rotten bread and unhealthy cabbages which is par from what they are taught in their programmes at the institution. The participant, therefore, asked the entertainment officer, who is female to report their grievances to members of administration. Participants from C Polytechnic mentioned that the role of the Food Officer was occupied by a male student but students preferred approaching the female member of their SRC. For they seemed to be better understanding and motherly.

4.3.3.4 Representation of special interest groups

The study also established that female students were engaged in student governance to represent the misrepresented groups in their institutions. From the responses gathered it was discovered that 30% of the female students holding positions in the Electoral Committee were elected to represent the underrepresented female students’ populace at the institution. One participant pointed out that female students were nominated into the committee to make up for female students’ under-representation.
The study established that a larger part of the female students in the SRC at A Teachers’ College and D Teachers’ College explained that they occupied positions in the SRC because there where no female contestants. As a result, students and staff members in their institution encouraged them to contest. Another major issue raised by the participants was that they found themselves in the SRC because of the Affirmative Action policy which is used in their institutions. One of the participant said she did not have the passion to be in the SRC but the lecturers and students admired the confidence she had and encouraged her to participate. The study also revealed that female students occupy inferior positions and make peripheral contributions in the decisions-making because they were nominated rather than elected into student governance offices. Some of the participants said they did not care about the position they occupied but they only wanted to be in the SRC as they had been requested.

4.3.3.5 Organising sports and entertainment activities

The study identified that female students were more participative in sports and entertainment offices. Some of their roles included organising sporting and entertainment events. From the interviews, three of the female students assuming roles in the Sports and Entertainment explained that they arranged for friendly matches within their institution as well as with other tertiary institutions in Harare. The participants explained that their roles included engaging female students into sporting activities which were usually regarded as a male students’ domain. A participant from D who was holding the position of the Sports Officer explained that she initiated the idea that sporting events become compulsory to every student because female students were not attending matches, saying they would rather go to the library instead.

The study also established that apart from the tournaments that were held in their institutions, female students in sporting offices were also responsible for organising tournaments and
budgeting for national sports events held by ZITUSA. The participants explained that the organisation was responsible for hosting sports tournaments for all colleges in Zimbabwe. The researcher observed that no female student from H tertiary institution was an elected member of ZITUSA. The participant from C Polytechnic also mentioned that she was responsible for the Miss Polytechnic College as well as the Exhibition that was held in their institution with the assistance of other SRC members at the institution. Showing that females were more interested in beauty issues even, when they are in power.

4.3.3.6 Consensus decision-making in SGB

The participants also highlighted that besides decisions being made according to the offices the students held, the study also found out that decisions were made through the input of every member within the governance organisation in the tertiary institutions. Most of the participants explained that some of the verdicts made required consensus decision-making, for example, issues to do with school fees, food, or accommodation. Most of the participants mentioned that student governance organisations are bureaucratic thus consulting with every member was required. As a result, meetings were called for and issues were discussed by all the members in the SRC.

The study gathered that although female students were free to contribute to the decision-making, they did not make many contributions because the meetings were male dominated. The chairing people were men, thus they subjected to ideas raised by men. The participants explained that invariably female students did not support each other’s proposals, thereby making it easier for male students to oppose the motion. In addition, although decisions were made through consensus the participants explained that the SRC President was the one who had a final say in all decisions whether one contributes in the meetings or not.
4.3.3.7 Few female students participate in voting

In the study, the researcher learnt that students can participate in student governance through voting. Five percent of the female students not holding elected positions in student organisation mentioned that their role in student governance was voting for members of the SRC. One of the participants said she participates in voting because it is a good experience as she gets to hear what other students were saying. The other common reason given was that the students have to make a contribution in the selection of people were addressing their welfare on campus. However, it also emerged that not all female students participate in voting. A number of the participants highlighted voter apathy. As one student highlighted that she had not been aware that female students were underrepresented in voting or in elected positions. Other students applauded that they did not engage in voting because it would not change anything regarding their welfare on the campus. This implies that the voting process had loopholes as indicated by student in colleges where there were no ballot boxes and the system was not strictly monitored.

4.3.3.8 Limited attendance to institutional meetings by female students

The study identified that students participate in their governance through attending institutional meetings called for by members of the SRC or any other student organisation in the different institutions. The study revealed that students at A Teachers’ College had consultation meetings with members of the SRC once every month. Participants at C Polytechnic explained that students’ meetings were held once in every term. The researcher discovered that most SRC, the Electoral Committee members rarely call for meetings. One other participant spelt out those SRC members in their institution conducted meetings with students when they wanted to contest for positions in the SRC or into the SUP. The study established that female students were afraid to support other female students because once elected members into office they rarely get concerned with the students, who happen to have
voted them into power. Generally, most comments were of the view that males were not jealous of each other.

The study also revealed that female students not holding elected positions did not attend meetings. Female students justified their absence from these meetings saying they were not given the opportunity to accept or reject some of the decisions made by their SRC members or administration. Some of these areas had to do with payments of tuition fees and the accommodation, as result they felt it was of no purpose to attend the meetings. The study also established that most of the female students did not attend meetings because the issues that they raised during the meetings were not considered. An example given was that female students raised an issue to do with the bad condition of their hostel bathrooms but the matter was not addressed. However, male students in the institution had raised the need to renovate the Tennis Court and it was in no time refurbished. This tennis court was male initiated. This tends to confirm one assertion by a female participant that there are usually no changes to their situations whether they voice out their concerns to the SRC or not.

Most of the female students in student governance organisations indicated, few female students attended meetings even if issues concerning them were to be discussed. The Deans of students also concurred that female students were not enthusiastic of attending meetings. The study participants explained that they were usually absent from meetings because they were busy with their school work. Another excuse given was that they were not notified of the meetings or they may not have seen the invitations on the notice boards.

The study gathered that the reason why few female students participate in meetings was that they were not confident to express themselves during the debates held in the meetings. They
feared to be verbally abused by males. Most of the participants mentioned that they had never given any complaint to the SRC even if they had burning issues. Only a few of the female student’s were confident to stand their ground. One participant from a University said “I go to the SRC if I have a problem I need addressed, for example, if we need a venue for our club or accommodation on campus”.

4.3.3.9 Female students who attend national SGB

The research established that one female student who is the President at A Teacher’s College attended the General Council meetings with ZINASU. The participant mentioned that she contributed to the decisions made during meetings. The General Council of ZINASU was presided by Presidents and Vice Presidents from all the tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Out of the 11 members elected to carry out the day-to-day political work of the organisation, only three female students from tertiary institutions were members of this organisation. The national executive council for ZICOSU comprises of 27 members. The study established that only two female students were occupying elected positions in the National Executive of ZICOSU comprised of 27 members.

The researcher learned that B University was not a member of national student governance bodies of Zimbabwe due to the political standing of these organisations. On the same note, the researcher observed that A Teachers’ College and C Polytechnic College have no female students who had been elected into the national student governance organisations.

4.3.3.10 Failure to implement gender policy in tertiary institutions

The study revealed that the constitutions and gender policies at C Polytechnic, B University, A Teachers’ College and D Teachers’ College sought to promote the participation of female students in students’ governance. However, A Teachers’ College did not have a gender
policy. Rather, the institution used the National Gender Policy for Zimbabwe. The institution also had A Teachers’ Policy which did not mention anything on the participation of female students in student governance. Rather, the policy mentions the institutions’ expectations in their students’ assignments, projects, tests and examinations. The policy also mentions the considerations made if female students get pregnant within the institution or when they are on attachment.

From analysing the gender policies for B University, C Polytechnic and D Teachers’ Colleges, the researcher learnt that they were formed after the realisation of the gender inequalities in the management systems within the institutions. The policies also outlined that they were in accordance with the Zimbabwean government which calls for gender equality. The researcher understood that the gender policies for C Polytechnic, D and G University aimed to promote equal participation in the administration, academic and non-academic staff and the student affairs sectors. The study also established that the gender policy for C Polytechnic was formulated after the realisation that women were still lagging behind in political and decision-making positions in the institution. The gender policy at B University was formulated after the administration’s realisation of gender inequality in management positions, student enrolment and the SRC. The B University Gender Policy mentions that its role is to promote the participation of women in decision-making at all levels at the university. The researcher discovered that D and A Polytechnic gender policies aim to attain 50% of women in decision-making positions. The D Gender Policy (2008) stipulates that some of their tactics included reviewing the college policies for gender sensitivity, addressing gender imbalances through Affirmative Action, empowerment of female members in the institution and leadership training. E University stipulated, in its constitution, that the president must be a female.
The gender mainstreaming strategies mentioned in the gender policies for B University, D Teachers’ College and C Polytechnic College included putting into practice a gender policy within their institutions, reviewing institutional policies to make them gender sensitive. The institutions also intend to monitor and evaluate the impact of the policies regarding gender equality in the institutions, redressing inequalities through affirmative action and empowerment of female students. The institutions also intend to carry out educational campaigns that sought to promote gender equality. The other strategy mentioned was improving equal representation at levels within the institution as well as discouraging the use of violence and non-gender sensitive language within these tertiary institutions.

The B University Charter of 1992 mentions the need for a students’ representing body. Furthermore, the constitution stipulates that “every student has the freedom of conscience and expression, association, the freedom to meet freely and associate with other people or other students of their choice, to pull out of or to join an organisation, to be protected from bullying, indecent assault and verbal and physical assault”. The constitution mentions that every student can participate in the SRC or the Student Union Parliament despite their “race, tribe, sex, creed or nationality”. The researcher learnt that the one university’s Gender Policy went a step ahead of other policies by allowing provision to adjust the institutions’ constitutional policies to make them gender sensitive. The researcher managed to gain access to the SRC policies for B University, A Teachers’ College and D Teachers’ College SRC constitutions. C Polytechnic College was still in the process of formulating its SRC constitution.

The study findings revealed that the SRC constitution for A Teachers’ College provided for the right of every student to participate through speaking and voting at general meetings,
nominating participants into the SRC, standing for elections or voting for candidates of the SRC. The constitution also mentions that every student should be protected from discrimination or harassment on the basis of religion, sex, ethnic, or national origin by other students or the administration.

Question 4 on questionnaires for students in SRC was mainly answered through typical cases which showed the real gendered experiences of both male and female students which affected their entrance rate into participating in SGB.

How did you step up to that post? You can write a typical case on a separate sheet of paper.

**Typical Case 1 Farai’s Story**

I Peter the president of the SRC at A Teachers College, give this profile about my life in short. It explains some of the things which influenced me to land a post as the president of the student relations committee. Social responsibilities and exposure to leading the religious activities contributed immensely therefore I was moulded to be a good leader.

I was born in a family of six. At the age of four years was very energetic and always like taking leading roles in drama plays and games during my early childhood development course. Moreover I always enjoyed dominating during childhood plays. Furthermore, the environment I was in came many leaders from various disciplines such as political leaders, business chief executive officers and many. This fostered the zeal of wanting to be a leader at an early age.

By virtue of being the last born it was my prerogative to be entitled to parents, I was groomed at an early age to be an effective leader. All the family properties and financial managements were left to me to run. This alone instilled a sense of being responsible and conservation of resources to produce optimum results. Due to the tremendous support that was echoed by my parents, being enrolled at a Church Christian School, fostered good moral values both at school and in the society. For the seven years I was at primary level, I managed to attain a leadership role as the chairperson of the Scripture Union for a period of three years. This experience cultivated more skills and good communication skills as a leader.

I was a prefect and vice head boy at secondary and advanced level respectively. This helped me develop self- esteem, confidence and courage as I led a huge group of students. Moreover, the high levelled meetings and
gatherings I attended, spruced up my way of self-presentation. Therefore it enhanced a good way of expressing my views and opinions eloquently.

Apart from the academic merits, I was very privileged to hold a post of a Junior Councillor for Ward 11 in a certain district; this post developed evaluating skills in me. I was also a leader for the District Protection Committee. This post made me develop affection in helping children facing or having challenges in a diplomatic way.

Soon after completing my advanced level, I rendered my serves in the government under the Ministry of Primary Education as a relief teacher and served for two years which enabled me to realise the difference amongst pupils and ways of solving the problems amicably. At this period I was involved in coaching of core curricular activities and sometimes participated in teachers’ games. This instilled the spirit of team work in me.

My enrolment at a teachers college came as great milestone opening a bright future ahead of me. The college orientation versed me with the rules and regulation of the college. This was not hard for me to adopt since I have a strong Christian background. The departure of the third year students paved way for the admin to grant us permission to campaign for the post of the student relations committee president.

My campaigning was a tough one since my opponents also had good public relations and good orators. Despite all those challenges I managed to come up with strategies that lured people to vote for me. I bought the students some toiletry and beverages as per my campaign promises. A lady claimed victory as the president and I came second. However, since we are in a patriarchal society man dominates the ruling positions therefore I was sworn in as the president and the lady became my vice. It was the lady who secretly offered the post saying she had other pressing duties burdening her.

Comment

The typical case shows a number of issues as pertaining to male presidents.

Peter’s story shows that he was motivated by the social structure from birth to take up leadership posts. He would have role plays which he emulated political leaders, business chiefs and executive officers. The family also left to him responsibilities to run. He received all necessary support for him to excel in leadership. He was inspired to good communications skills as a chairperson of Scripture Union. His self-esteem was developed. He was a prefect at school. He was nurtured into confidence to become a president.
Typical Case 2

SRC President Male

I am Willard, a student representative council President at D Teachers’ College. I am 30 years old. I was born in a family of 4 and I am number two. I grew up in a middle class family and we used to live in a rural settlement. During my primary education, from grade 5 I was a prefect. At grade six I became the vice head boy and at grade7 was then nominated to be the school head boy.

Socially as a family we are members of the United Methodist Church. I was elected to be the secretary for the youths at our circuit. And this showed me that I had leadership skills as from school and at church I was being given responsibility duties.

When I enrolled for high at a group A school I was elected to be a prefect from form 3 up to 4. And when I was an upper 6 I became the school head boy. From that experience I gained over years when I come to college I had a passion to be in the SRC thus I campaigned and students voted for me to be their President the post I held for 3 years.

Typical Case 3

SRC Member Minister of Religion Female

I am Pauline an SRC member. I hold a post as a Minister of Religion. I was nurtured in a Christian family. My parents are elders in the ZAOGA FIF ministries. We are 3 in our family 2 girls and 1 boy. Every Sunday we used to go to church as a family and during mid-week we met other church members during home bible study.

I started my grade 1 in 1998 at Kagande Primary School in Mutoko. I started as a group leader as well as a class monitor from grade 3 and at grade5 I became a prefect. At grade 6 I became the school vice head girl and at grade 7 I became the head girl.

I started my secondary school in 2004. I was elected class monitor as well as book carrier. During this time I was also a member of the Scripture Union at xxxxxx Secondary School. When I was in form 3 I became the vice head girl and in the Scripture Union I become the President. In 2008 I became the school head girl and re-elected to be the Scripture Union President at Kagande School. This gave me the leadership skills.

In 2009 I started my A ‘level at Nyangani High now this school had a larger enrolment than any other I had attended before. Also I was a member of the Scripture Union and when I was in upper 6 I became the school head-girl a position that strengthened my leadership skills. During this time I became a committee member of the Manicaland Province Scripture Union Committee.
All these laid fertile grounds for the position I am now holding as a minister of religion. In 2012 when I started my studies with the G University, I learnt that there was an SRC board which represented the students. In 2013 I contested to be the Minister of Religion and I was elected. Thus this had been nurtured due to background I grew up as well as administrative duties I carried as from my grade 3 up to University.

From the above story the researcher came up with a number of codes which showed the challenge of females. However there are similarities in both cases that affect both males and females.

- The parents influence the attitude of future career.
- Church has a role to play in grooming leadership.
- One’s destiny can be encouraged or can be discouraged by a social experience, for example, enlightened parents can motivate their girl children to be ambitious.
- The child’s background influences her road to success.

**Typical Case 4. Male**

I am a 24 year old guy. I am a SRC President. I came from a middle class family and I am a 5th child in a family of 6. I grew up in xxxxx and I did my primary school at xxxxx Primary School from primary I had never been nominated at any of the administrative duties. I attended my High at Harare High School and the position I held was that of being a class monitor for only one week and I was removed. But when I started university education I started to gain popularity as I had unique character and I had dread locks. Thus many people liked to associate with me. By this time two of my brothers were based in the UK and they supported me financially. I joined the ENACTUS club and my friends encouraged me to campaign for the post of an SRC President. At first I hesitated but these friends gave me courage such that I forwarded my name for nomination and I was allowed to campaign. I mobilized with my friends and we brought some t-shirts for campaigning, printed some flyers and bought some books which we used for campaigning. I campaigned and won the elections this was because I used my financial muscle as I had never had any leadership skill acquired before.

**Comment**

- One can be appointed to leadership just because he or she is unique.
- The male has an advantage because no leadership skills were analysed.

- Popularity can make someone to be voted for.

- Because of our culture most females are not popular they are threatened to be composed.

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<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
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<th>GENDER</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>CASE 2</td>
<td>Student at B</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE 3</td>
<td>Student at C</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE 4</td>
<td>Student at D</td>
<td>Male</td>
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4.4 Institutional Factors and their Influence on Gender

One aspect which supports gender equity in tertiary institutions is the affirmative action. In other institutions there is rationalisation of positions, for example, the Principal nominated the current female SRC committee members because they had not campaigned for 2015 elections. One Dean of students explained that they hold leadership training workshops. They also have a Student Representative Assembly (SRA) composed of class representatives.

On the negative factors, social, and cultural as well as economic factors were cited. However, the most hindrance was economic factors due to the situation which Zimbabwe is undergoing. This is the issue of shortage of currency due to lack of production by industries. All the Deans of students were not free to discuss on issues of rape. However, sexual harassment was said to be subtle, and the females do not come out because they feared victimisation.
4.5 Factors that Promote Female Students’ Participation in Student Governance

Though they are factors which hinder female participation in student governance, the factors which promote can not be ignored. These are going to be discussed below.

4.5.1 Leadership training

From the discussions held, most of the students explained that The Women’s Trust (TWT), a women’s organisation trains female students on leadership in their institutions. The other organisations that were mentioned were Youth Alive and Silveira House. These organisations also train young women in student governance organisation or those who are not. Female students who were elected into positions in the SRC at D. Teachers’ College reported that they attended the TWT workshops where they acquired knowledge and the skills on how to participate in student governance bodies.

The deans of students from C Polytechnic College, D and A Teachers’ Colleges explained that the organisations were no longer carrying out many leadership programmes and workshops as they used to do in the past due to financial constraints. The Dean of students from C Polytechnic said TWT used to mobilise female students to campaign for posts, to vote or to promote other female students campaigning for posts in the SRC. The Dean of students mentioned that through the support of TWT, C Polytechnic College had one female SRC President in the year 2007. The student was also elected into the Zimbabwe National Student Union (ZINASU). The Dean of students mentioned that since 2007, C Polytechnic College has never had another female President of female students occupying influential posts in the SRC. The participants mentioned that the TWT trains female students in self-empowerment, self-esteem, confidence, managing anger, sexuality, sex and violence among other things.
Most of the participants mentioned that the leadership training had encouraged them to contest for posts and raised their self-confidence.

### 4.5.2 Experience in leadership

The study established that female students contest for positions in student governance bodies because they were once leaders in High or Secondary School. One participant highlighted that she had once acted as the Secretary General in a school where she once studied. Her roles included deliberating and writing minutes, dissemination of information about the administration meetings. Others were previously leaders at their churches.

Another participant mentioned that she had once acquired a position as the sub warden or a hostel representative; therefore, she was not afraid to contest for a post. Her roles included monitoring female students’ welfare in the halls of residence. Some participants revealed that they once had been in leadership during their primary and secondary education but they did not wish to participate in the student governance in tertiary institutions. Some of the reasons given were that it would be a disgrace if one lost in the contests. The other explanation given was that student governance in tertiary institutions required a lot of commitment as compared to secondary or high school, therefore, they did not have the time to spare.

### 4.5.3 Supportive environment promoting participation

The study identified that a supportive environment promoted female students’ participation. The participants explained that administration members were not supportive of student governance organisations. It was also explained that administration members were afraid that the student organisation would bring out the grey areas within the institution’s management. It was also highlighted in another interview that the members of administration in tertiary institutions were not transparent in regards to sports funds; this was because the sports
representatives in the SRC were supposed to be engaged in organising sports tournaments but they are excluded. One participant expounded that female students were not free to participate due to the autocratic nature of their administration. The participant explained that the institution had an oppressive environment and as a result female students were not free to voice out anything. Another participant brought up the issue that students who voiced their concerns on the status of food were told by members of administration that they risked being expelled.

The study also gathered that members of administration were passive to students’ needs therefore, they did not realise the need to promote female students’ engagement in student governance organisations. Respondents from B University and C Polytechnic College mentioned that usually only one female student occupies a post in the SRC and the administration does nothing to change the situation.

In the interview the researcher discovered that most of the participants at A Teachers’ College as well as D Teachers’ Colleges mentioned that members of administration within their institutions promoted female students’ engagement in decision-making. As a result, female students usually made up a larger part of the SRC membership. The researcher further discovered that C Polytechnic had male dominated courses; therefore, less female students play roles in the SRC because they would have enrolled a few females already. The study findings also revealed that female students were afraid of male students because they dominated in all the student governance activities. Some of the responses given show that female students in student governance organisations were encouraged to participate through the support they received from their family and friends. One participant mentioned she had been motivated to participate by her family which gave her emotional and financial support during the campaigns.
4.5.4 Factors that hinder female students’ participation in student governance

The paragraph below discusses response on factors hindering female participation in student governance bodies.

4.5.4.1 Social stigma

Most of the interviewees mentioned that leadership has always been male dominated hence it would be queer for a female student to compete with male students. Most of the student participants in focus group discussions, mentioned that female students who do not have roles in student governance organisations discourage other female students through calling them negative names and looking down on their efforts. Female students in major decision-making positions also mentioned that male students devalue their roles. One participant highlighted that during meetings the members expected her to organise refreshments for them although she occupied a high position of being President of the club. However, men said that they felt honoured to be served by females.

In this study female students also explained that it has always been the norm that only one female student occupied a position in the SRC in their institutions. As a result, female students were afraid of breaking this norm. A response by one male dean that matches to this is that “women in general believe men should always lead in all the decision-making processes’. The study also established that students have the belief that influential roles such as that of the President and Vice President should only be occupied by male students. Female students explained that the role is too demanding and demands a person with a lot of courage. One of the participant holding a post as the President mentioned that,
It is hard to make progress when sitting in front of fifteen men who will not want to listen half of the time during meetings. You appear as if you are selling a bag of snakes, which no one desires to buy.

This means that nobody was listening to her ideas, and it became hard to lead the men.

The study also found out that male students dominate by taking up female students’ roles. One participant highlighted that female students were the ones who succumb to male domination because they allow male students to take over their roles. The researcher also learned that male students in student governance organisations were usually not gender sensitive because they believed that by being gender sensitive they will be regarded as cowards.

4.5.4.2 Verbal harassment

From the data the researcher gathered, it also emerged from the study that female students who want to contest for positions in student governance offices were verbally assaulted by male students. In the interviews female students mentioned that male students make false claims of their sexual encounters so as to diminish female students’ confidence during election times. One participant mentioned that she had to withdraw before elections were held because male students wrote bad things about her which made students believe that she was a prostitute. However, through encouragement she got back on track. Another female student also stated that the male students were demeaning her but she had to remain focused in order for her to win the votes.

The study also established that female students expecting to occupy positions in student governance organisations or those who hold elected positions in student governance structures were perceived as having loose morals. Some of the names associated with female
students in governance are “whore, not marriage type, lonely lady” among others as was explained by one female president who overcame all those sentiments by displaying self confidence. Furthermore, one Dean of students said that, when female students or lecturers attend meetings called for by The Women’s Trust (TWT) they would be regarded as “mahure” meaning prostitutes. The Dean admitted that the claims will be false but they scare away women from attending workshops or leadership training for selfish motives.

4.5.4.3 Lack of motivation by female students
The study established that female students lack the motivation to participate. Most of the female students in governance highlighted that it would not be possible to force female students to engage in student governance unless they themselves have the will to do so. It was mentioned that female students are not assertive about their participation in student governance. As a result, few of them participate in meetings, elections or contest for roles in student governance. The participants alleged that because female students lack ambition they lose the elections. During the focus group discussions one male participant argued that there is need for a change in mind set by both male and female students for female students to be accepted in student governance.

4.6 Importance of Gender Equity in SGB
From the interviews with the Dean of students, the researcher gathered that gender equity is not only important in student governing bodies but is the right thing to do. One male student explained that,

“Gender equality attracts the top talented. It provides the organisation’s talent to the entire pool. The institution with gender equity is likely to have better organisational performance. It brings into the body varied perspectives.
Produces a more holistic analysis and looks for great effort teaching to improved decision-making”

One of the Dean of students stated that empowering women means a more efficient use of the nation’s human talents endowment. The other Dean gave an illustration that, “the institution yet alone the nation’s competitiveness depends, among other things, on whether and how it educates and utilises female talents. Gender equity enhances the individual’s well-being and that of society”

One Dean of students indicated that gender equity is important because it facilitates better communication between the students and the administration. She further explained that it was very important to create an open and friendly atmosphere to address gender discrimination issues in colleges and universities. Females have got issues to address, for example challenges they have in doing their studies. If they are involved in the student governing bodies they became representatives or mouth pieces of the other women in colleges.

One Dean of students mentioned that, “Gender equity is a scheme of promoting human rights. The Equality Act (2006) aims to prevent discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Gender equity, therefore, nurture confidence in the females. The self-confidence is an individual’s belief that he or she has the ability to produce results, accomplishes goals or performs tasks competently. Individuals are known to acquire confidence through training, practicing and experience. However, the particular way to which males and females are socialised and nurtured significantly contribute to the confidence gap between the sexes. One female student explained that practices and training in the formative years are very critical in shaping the fundamental later life dispositions. If at an early age one is instilled fear or criticism he or she will feel insecure.
Since institutions of Higher learning are centres for skill training, gender equity becomes critical in that it motivates female students to participate in decision-making issues such as, resources management at an institution and politics of the institution.

4.6.1 Importance of gender equity to men

From the interview, one female dean explained that addressing gender equity in leadership, not only removes disadvantages for females but for males as well. She elaborated that,

The words gender and sex are often used interchangeably, but there are important distinctions between the two concepts. Sex is based on anatomical, physiological characteristics of males and females, while gender is a social constructed, that is, a society's assumptions about the way a man or woman should look and behave. Traditional gender roles encompass the activities, responsibilities, and decision-making power that a society has historically assigned to men and women within public and private spaces. The specifics may differ across societies, but no society assigns equal power or status to men and women.

Men were also having responsibilities and were now involved in child care activities therefore, they deserve attention too. Men not involved in leadership and who do not campaign for SRC positions often lack a network support. These men may also have daughters who are likely to consider broader career goals. The male dean laughed and said, “Even judges with daughters were more likely to judge cases in favour of women’s rights.”

When man do more care giving at home and in their lives, violence against women failed? Delinquency declines the health happiness and wellbeing of men. Children and women improve and battles between sexes diminish. There is clearly something in the gender conservation for men.

One of the Deans of student expressed that, gender equity also exposed the plan and burdens that men face and not the feminist view that tell men to change in order to help woman.
One of the answers given for the importance of gender equity is that it gives the organisation balance of power thereby catering for every sex view. Gender equity is not just good for the person involved in the SGB, but also for everyone around him or her. When gender equity is exercised the lives of the people are improved. The failures and communities are helped.

One participant explained that gender equity is very important but there is need for dialogue between men and women in order for the dominant group to understand what needs change. Another male dean explained that, one point raised by the student president of another institution was that educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life.

According to Central Statistical Office (2002) women constituted 52% of the population in Zimbabwe. Therefore, according to the Dean at H, there was need to harness the potential. The demographic data shows that 90% are female at this college said one Dean of students therefore if 90% of the problems are not addressed then we have a big problem.

One senior dean, explained in detail;

In teachers’ colleges, gender equity becomes an eye opener to student teachers who will go into the field to teach. They become conscious of gender equity in case of duty delegation. Some of the teachers out there think that sweeping is only for girls. When I was in my school going age, most of the teachers would say “girls it’s now time to go home lets sweep”.

4.7 Strategies to Alleviate Problems of Gender Inequity in SGB

One Dean of students mentioned that, “gender equity is being done half-heartedly in most cases. There is more of talk than practice. The goals are not followed. However, she suggested that, “let’s keep talking about girl empowerment and also support the disadvantaged”. From the focus groups it was learnt that, basic education should also be given before the elections. Male students need to encourage females to participate. The male
Dean posed a question “do you know that males also feel very safe when they have females in the administration?

From the research findings, the researcher observed that, every tertiary institution needed to have a constitution which is then placed in the Dean’s office. The Deans of students needed to be familiar with the constitution.

One Dean of student mentioned that;

One of the best ways to alleviate the problems is to start teaching children about gender equity at a young age. They need to be made to know the consequences of gender inequity so that when they become older they will know what is right from what is wrong. They will also teach each other. These gender stereotypes should be countered from the Kinder-garden to university. She further explained that it is more important for an organisation to adapt to the whole person in both males and females. Gender stereotype is hard to break, however, as a society we need to encourage people to go beyond stereotype and recognise the contributions that each individual male or female can make to the organisation. A male or female must just be seen as a person.

One dean also explained that, on addressing the issue of gender there should be national and international convention. Other ideas which came out from focus group discussions are that” there should be massive media campaign, dramas and film shootings on the girl child.” One SRC president said, “The colleges also needed to have workshops for the first year students with emphasis on the advantages of gender equity” Other sentiments were, “Some female bosses were also rough and they treat men poorly”. According to one of the Deans of students, gender equality should be made part of the training. Young people should be supported into joining SGB regardless of their gender.

One of the Deans of students said that;

*College administrators should be pro-active about welcoming women. Campaigns need to be monitored and evaluated regularly for equal treatment. Tertiary institutions should aim for a 50 – 50 gender split in the SGB.*” One of the students encouraged the administration to use
its power for networking. According to him, coaching networking and workshops can help women in developing their careers.

Since gender inequity is rooted in attitudes, societal institutions and market forces, political commitment at highest national and international level is essential to trigger social change. One male dean explained that there should be organised debates on the challenges of gender equity in SGB. These debates, if they are properly organised, they may aid in removing gender based attitudes. The discussions need to be open. Furthermore, there might be disagreements between women and women than with men.

From the focus group discussions a suggestion was given that universities need to carry out a gender impact assessment thus enable policy makers to identify and differentiate effect on males and females. This assessment may provide policy makers with a means of ensuring that policies and practices do not have unintended discrimination impacts, it will also enable policy makers to identify policies and practices that promote gender equity.

One of the students said that the administration must indeed buy literature that supports gender equity; such books may motivate and was an eye opener to all people.

One of the views given on focus group discussion was that men should know how females feel and also females how men feels. Men may see themselves as being more competent in SGB than females; this means that without realising it, governance is segregated by gender. One of the female deans explained that, the colleges must as well; involve females in formulating organisational policies.

Another view from the focus group discussion was that, the College and University curricular should cover issues of gender. The subjects must also be taken with seriousness so that it is examinable. Men can discriminate when actually they interpret it as good will; they can open
doors for females or offer to pay things which they do not do to their male colleagues. They think they are being nice.

Gender exclusion requires professional intervention and analysis. It can only be achieved through organisational vigilance and cultural change, thus; the Deans of students should encourage change of presidents from year to year.

One student explained that to achieve gender equity there must be the goal spirit within everyone in the organisation. Genuine equality means more, it means that there is justice and opportune for the wellbeing of all male and female.

One of the factors mentioned by participants on alleviating gender problem is that, the colleges and universities need to be safe environments for females. This includes freedom from harassment by male lecturers, sexual abuses should be explored. One Dean of students explained that:

There is need to determine the nature and extent of sexual abuse in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. He further explained that, available policies should be developed to enhance the participation of females. This can be done through formulating individual gender policies for each institution. Funds should be donated by government and donors to enhance female participation.

From the responses given in focus groups, there are only three possible explanations for the lower numbers of females in the SRB.

1- They are not capable of doing work required at the top.

2-Women do not have the desire to be at the top.

3-There are structural impediments preventing women from reaching the top.

One dean commented that, it appears as if women do not have the desire to be on the top, however, women do not lack ambition, and it is only that, their approach to leadership posts can superficial appearance lack of ambition when judged against a male co-operative
One student said each organisation should know the facts about its situation on gender equity. The organisation should compare itself to other organisations.

One dean of students revealed that everyone should recognise that the gender balance is not exclusively a woman’s issue. People should be convinced that the entire organisation benefits when its workforce is more diverse. One of the students said that men should realise that they are part of the gender policy programme. “The leadership at the top needs to realise the importance of the issue of providing training on gender equity in SGB. Another student, lady explained that, administrators should identify gender discrimination and plan on how to deal with it.

An example given by one of the students is that, the colleges should set specific concrete goals, such as having 50% females in the SGB by 2016. She emphasised that, “when everyone in the institution understands the goals of that institution, they all know that action must be taken to meet the goals. Goals such as to increase gender equity were not enough to trigger action.” One female dean expressed the view that an institution should develop a system of accountability on the formulated goals.

One of the female SRC students suggested that the administration should identify individuals who are motivated to advance and invest in them. To improve gender balance in SGB individuals who aspire to move up need to be identified and supporting structures should be created around them. One female president expressed her sentiments that the institution should identify female role models, this makes other incoming female students to gain confidence from role models who conquered the stereotypes. One dean of students explained that colleges need to show case institution’s successful female’s features in the SRB and what they did in their days as presidents of SRC.
Affirmative action increases participation, deans echoed that the organisations should publicise its efforts of promoting gender equity. There is need to create and support women and men, not only in universities but also even teachers’ colleges.

Some of the sentiments mentioned in focus group discussions were that colleges should promote research on gender issues and undertake curriculum review. They should also provide scholarship for girls.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The study findings are discussed under four main objectives which are the extent of gender equity in the governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, factors surrounding tertiary institution in Zimbabwe which hinders females to participate in student governing body’s, gender equity importance in tertiary institutions and strategies to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies.

4.8.1 Extent of gender equity in SGB

Female students who participate in governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary education were very few and this was observed by the researcher from the interviews, focus group discussions and questions for SRC Presidency. This was in line with Goche (2014) who propounds that universities are microcosm of mainstream society. At tertiary education, girls rarely take up leadership post. Birds (2011) also points out that organisations are rarely gender neutral, they have subtle gender discrimination. Adalebu (2010) is also in agreement when he explains that 15% of the influential positions have been occupied by women. Mama (2008) and Mudiwa (2010) confirm this when they mention that women rarely participated in continental seminars or workshops held for institutions of higher learning. This indicated that their ability to influence decision-making was very low; however, women need receive equal
participation opportunities. Young (2004) found out that young women in leadership believed that they require a lot of effort to stay there.

The study established that tertiary institutions were either private or government owned. The researcher gathered that tertiary institutions which were government owned were run under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development and they had the SRC as their student governance organisation. It was also discovered that B University is a private institution that allowed students’ participation in the Electoral Committee and the SRC. Students also participate in Senate and Board meetings held at the institution through the SRC representatives.

The researcher also noticed that female students in some tertiary institutions were not participating in the national student governance bodies. These findings relate to the Liberal Feminist theory assertion that during the 1960s and 70s women’s roles were mainly household chores only. Women were not allowed to enter influential positions in politics or employment.

From the interviews, it was also established that few female students held elected positions in student governance organisations. The factors hindering female students’ participation included male students’ domination, traditional beliefs, sexual harassment, and social stigma, lack of motivation by female students and the lack of a supportive environment. These findings authenticate the assertion by the Liberal Feminist theory that society has been oppressing women by excluding them from decision-making processes because of their biological. However, discrimination limits the freedom and political rights of women because according to the Liberal Feminist theory, everyone was created with the ability to participate
in decision-making processes. Sall (2000), says obstacles to women’s participation lie in the long-established laws and practices that deny women equal rights to men.

The Liberal Feminist theory explains that both men and women were created with the ability to reason, therefore, they should be given a chance to make choices for themselves. Moreover, the theory explains that everyone should be allowed to make decisions without depriving others of their rights. This should, therefore, be the case in student governance in tertiary institutions. Liberal feminists argue that women should be allowed to influence decision-making processes in political, economic, or social sectors directly or through representation (Ford, 2002; Tong, 2009).

The findings agree to the Shared Governance theory which promotes participation of every member within tertiary institutions. Shared governance involves giving every person within an institution the chance to exercise major responsibilities (Pateman, 1993; Olson, 2007). Tertiary institutions’ governance is considered as a communal system of government which allows people affected by decisions to contribute in decision-making processes. Apart from being absent in elected positions in student governance organisations, few female students were participating in voting, expressing opinions or being active in students’ demonstrations. The Liberal Feminist theory advocates for equal participation in governance activities. This agrees with to Chikwanha cited in Chimankire (2009) findings that few female students participated in political organisations, attended meetings or participated in demonstrations at the University of Zimbabwe and Africa University. This shows that female students were interested in participating in activities that do not require much of their commitment. As mentioned by Gaidzanwa (1993) an insignificant number of female students were “visible or audible in student politics” instead female students participated in clubs and
societies. These findings are in line with the findings of Sweetman (2000) who revealed that there was still gender stereotyping against women in some third year world. However, the researcher is of the view that one should be incorporated into the governing body through a measure of skills and capabilities not sex.

4.8.2 Policies lacking implementation in tertiary institutions

The Liberal Feminist theory advocates for equal legal rights as well as equality policies that will ensure a correlation between the number of women in a government and the contributions they are allowed to make in decision-making processes. Although most colleges had the gender policies that seek to promote the participation of women in student governance it is surprising that despite these policies, the participation of female students in student governance in these institutions was still low. This shows that there are still challenges in the student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. These challenges need strategies to alleviate them.

The researcher discovered that the Gender Policy for H was formulated in 2008 but it had not been implemented. The Dean of students at C Polytechnic explained that another patron was employed in 2011 after the intervention of TWT, an organisation that sought to mainstream gender as one of its focuses in tertiary institutions. This confirms egalitarian liberal feminism assertion that women organisations should identify and eradicate factors leading to the discrimination of women. As a result, the implementation of the Gender Policy is still in its infancy.

The policies at G and H mention Affirmative Action as an approach of promoting equality but it is sad to note that male students were still holding the levers of authority in student governance in these institutions. Affirmative Action has been effective at A Teachers’
College and C Teachers’ College as witnessed from the larger number of female students occupying roles in student governance organisations although they occupied roles of less influence.

In the document review, the researcher observed that the B University Gender Policy mentions that it will adopt gender sensitive issues to its constitution. Nevertheless, the B University SRC constitution has not been amended to promote female students’ participation in student governance. The researcher discovered that the constitutions in the tertiary institutions in A are not alluding to the participation of female students in student governance. They make a general mention that everyone should participate despite their race, colour or sex, which is not enough to promote female students’ participation. What stood out in this research is that most female students were not aware of the existence of policies that promote their participation in their institutions.

The study also gathered that although the selected tertiary institutions in the researched area were in possession of the gender policies and constitutions which guide student governance, female students were still restricted from participating due to male students’ domination in student governance. In an almost similar study Chikwanha (2009), found out that only 4 participated in the SRC in Afrikaans Universities while 20 female students at the University of Potchefstroom had occupied posts in the SRC during the academic year 2002 to 2003. This was because the South African Students Congress (SASCO) had not implemented the African National Congress (ANC) policy that women were supposed to make up 30% of the membership in the SRC.
The above study finding tends to suggest how important it is to implement policies that promote female students’ participation. To support this, Makerere University implemented gender policy, sexual harassment policy, affirmative action. It also took measures such as, the awarding of female scholarships and the engendering of its curriculum so as to promote the participation of women in decision-making positions within their institution (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 2010). As a result of its gender mainstreaming efforts, Makerere University witnessed major improvements in women’s engagement in the university governance. Moreover, the enrolment of women also increased.

4.8.3 Factors promoting or hindering gender equity in SGB

The common factors mentioned as hindering participation of female students relate to the socialisation of the students. This also concurs with the study carried out by Young (2004), on the perceptions of young women leaders in the universities in the United States of America. Young (2004), found out that young women in leadership believed that extreme effort was required for them to remain in leadership. To explain this Sall (2000), argue that young women in tertiary institutions are anxious, insecure, dependent and more concerned about their social repute. Negative aspects mentioned included religion, culture and so forth. Workings (2002) also found out that though each woman’s story is unique, all tell of the challenges familiar to even women who seek the power and influence in male dominated cultures. Balancing professional and responsibilities, being judged by different standards than those applied to men.

That women are often sexually exploited by males with a status above and then is in line with Sinha (1995, p. 106) who elaborates that not only in the family do men use violence to control women to keep their jobs or posts, women have often had to put up with bosses who sexually harass them or even force them to have sex. Shaba (2000) explains that this sexual
harassment is any conduct of sexual nature uninvolved and unwanted that has an effect of placing the victim in a situation where they are made to work in a hostile environment. The study did not find cases of rape though all deans acknowledge that some forms of sexual harassment were happening. One challenge was lack of role proof.

One of the studies participants mentioned that when you attend workshops called for by women organisations other members of staff or students regarded you as uncultured. This was because in our Shona or African culture participation has always been reserved for male students. This confirms the Liberal Feminist assertion that obstacles to women’s participation emanate from the way they were socialised and long established laws on discrimination (Andersen, 1993). For too long women have been trying to fix these problems themselves by attempting to break through the glass ceiling and undertaking extra training.

One dean mentioned that tertiary institutions should work with students to develop college policies which promote gender equality. One of the students explained that she cannot even campaign because the parents would be very annoyed to hear that she is holding a post instead of doing her core business. Therefore, she suggested that parents should be involved and educated through circulars and workshops.

4.9 Importance of Gender Equity in SGB

The findings that gender equity is not only important in student governing bodies but is also the right thing to do and is in line with Mama (2008) and Serere (2004), who explain that the involvement of females in decision-making helps all sexes to exchange intellectual ideas which are needed to the development of an organisation.
Hadzizi (2006), declares that the administration should ensure that before a final decision is made, both male and female students should have had the opportunity to challenge the feasibility of the decision to be made. Young (2004), also mentions that diverse skills and abilities are acquired in tertiary institutions, they provide democratic value. Some of the democratic values are transparency, rule of law, consensus, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Mudiwa (2006), further analyse by arguing that democratic behaviour is most likely to occur when students have acquired certain knowledge, understanding and beliefs.

The researcher’s view is, therefore, that gender equity is not only important but it is the right thing to do, especially in student governing bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institutions.

On the aspect of female leadership traits, women were found to exhibit more skill which enhance their effectiveness. Sing (1995), found out that women leaders are more assertive, and persuasive, they have a stronger will to get things done and more willing to take risks than men leaders. Mudiwa (2010), also explains that women leaders have also been found to be more empathetic, flexible as well as strong in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts. The researcher is of the view that they read the situation accurately and take information from all sides before decision-making. They are also able to bring others around them. However, stereotypes have made women to have less freedom than men display when it comes to leadership styles. Women often face intense criticism from their subordinates. Even when woman occupy the same leadership positions as men, factors such a promotion, sexual hierarchy and men’s power makes women’s leadership very difficult. Sinha (1993, p. 38) therefore, suggests that women have now taken up professional roles in order to create meaning for themselves than potentials and capabilities.
Women riled by questionnaires as transformational leaders. They bring different and unique talents to workplace and it has resulted in women making remarkable heading in organisations. The researcher is of the view that when women are given the opportunity to lead, they employ leadership styles similar to those utilised by men. However, women can even add more traits of leadership than men.

4.10 Strategies to alleviate problems of gender inequity in SGB

There were problems and challenges hindering gender equity and they could be dealt with by employing some strategies. That gender equity should be taught at a tender age is in line with Fletcher (2013), who explains that, the structured inequalities give rise to different unequal life experiences which in turn, differentially orient children and adults in their desires, their aspirations, abilities and achievements. Gender differences start from the moment of birth between males and females. Stroquist (2007), postulates that most parents provide environments for children that differ in important ways according to gender. How parents interact with their children also tends to be dependent on their sex. For instance, fathers play more roughly with their sons than with their daughters. In addition, fathers frequently greet their children differently on the basis of their gender. Such differences in behaviour produce different socialisation experiences for males and females (Schaefer, 2004). This might be the reason why woman continue to be underrepresented in student governance bodies.

As an extension of the above, Fenema (2011) further explains that, from the time they are born, children are encouraged to behave in ways that are considered appropriately feminine or masculine throughout their life. According to Chaitya (2000), School peers, culture and society reinforce these values and norms. It is not just parents who socialise children but the society as a whole communicates clear messages to children as they grow up. Guiso, Monte,
Sapienza and Angeles (2008), note that children’s reading books have traditionally portrayed girls in stereotypically nurturing roles, and boys in more physical and action-oriented roles. The education system also treats girls and boys differently. Furthermore, boys are more likely to be praised for the intelligence of their work while girls are more likely to be commended for their neatness (Schaefer, 2004). However today there is now a positive development into gender equity. The legal and regulatory environment further enhances and legitimises gender stereotyping through discriminatory laws and practices which are reinforced by authoritarian systems of governance.

Clark (2010) contends that socialisation produces a gender schema. The gender schema is made on the basis of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for males and females; hence, children begin to behave in ways that reflect society’s gender roles. Guiso, Monte, Sapienza and Zangales (2008) suggest that one way to decrease the likelihood that children will develop gender schemas is to encourage the children to be androgynous. Hence, gender differences are stereotypes which are socially constructed by the society. This research sought to make findings that would enlighten parents on the best practices that do away with stereotyping, gender schema and gender roles, among others, so that boys and girls are brought up on the same platform that promotes learning, ability and skills based on potential so as to do away with the challenges of gender equity in student governance.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter was a presentation of the findings of the study that sought to investigate the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of tertiary institutions. The study revealed that students can participate in national or institutional student governance structures. Furthermore, female students occupy less influential positions in student
governance and that tertiary institutions have gender policies but they are not using them to promote female students’ engagement in decision-making processes. The study further revealed that traditional beliefs and negative institutional practices impede the participation of female students in student governance. The study findings relate to the Liberal Feminist theory because in as much that female students were in student governance organisations, they were occupying offices of low influence which was also the case in Western Europe during the 1960s and 70s. The Liberal Feminist theory argues that women and men were created equal therefore; they should be given equal opportunities to participate. Liberal Feminist theory advocates implementation of policies that promote the participation of women in governance structures.
CHAPTER FIVE: THESIS SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents summary and key findings of the study. The chapter also presents conclusion of the entire study based on the research findings. Chapter five also presents recommendations given to important stakeholders who are the Government of Zimbabwe, NGOs, students and members of administration in tertiary institutions.

5.2 Research Summary
The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutions. The study findings are derived from four research questions which are:

1. To what extent is gender equity evident in the governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions?

2. How do factors surrounding tertiary institution in Zimbabwe influence participation of females in student governing bodies?

3. Why is gender equity important in tertiary institutions?

4. What strategies can be put in place to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies?

The researcher gave a brief background of the nature of female students’ participation in student governance structures in the colonial and post-colonial period in Zimbabwe. The studies gathered that female students were not actively engaged in students’ governance organisations. Literature that relates to female students’ engagement in student governance structures was reviewed. The Liberal Feminist theory then served as the theoretical framework of the study. This chapter also presented the conventions and agreements that the
participation of women in decision-making processes as a way of revealing how governments are committed to promote women’s engagement in decision-making processes.

Chapter three discussed the research methodology. A qualitative research approach was used because it allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of female students’ participation in governance organisations in the selected tertiary institutions in Harare. The study participants included students holding elected positions in student governance structures, general students not holding elected positions and the Deans of students from the eight selected institutions in Harare. Chapter four discussed the research findings of the study. There are a few female students who take up leadership posts in SRC, generally.

The researcher found out that female students occupy positions of less influence and play less powerful roles in student governance organisations. It was also discovered that some tertiary institutions in Harare are not implementing policies that sought to promote female students’ participation in student governance. The factors that promote female students’ participation are leadership training, experience in leadership and a supportive environment. Factors that were reported to be hindering female students’ participation are social stigma, verbal harassment, and lack of support for elected female student. These findings relate to the Liberal Feminist theory, quest for equal participation opportunities. The findings also agree to past researches that were done regarding female students participation in governance organisations in tertiary institutions. There is a general misunderstanding of the term gender equity. The study also revealed that gender equity is very important because it is the right thing to do. It attracts the talented, it is also very important to men, it also gives the organisation balance of power. Among the ways of eradicating problems of gender were the facts that one of the best ways of alleviating the problem was to start teaching children about
gender at a young age. Tertiary institutions should aim for a 50-50 gender split in SGB. The administration is to carry out a gender impact assessment. College curricular should cover issues of gender and the subject must be taken with seriousness and be examinable. Finally, to achieve gender equity there must be goal spirit within everyone in the organisation and each college to have gender policies. Chapter five provides a summary of the findings of the study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance in eight tertiary institutions in Harare. The chapter also gives a conclusion to the study based on the research findings. Lastly, recommendations are made to the government of Zimbabwe, members of administration in tertiary institutions. These stakeholders were requested to implement measures that promote female students’ participation in students’ governance.

5.3 Findings

There are a few females participating in the student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. From the study the researcher found out that female students can participate in institutional or national students’ governance organisations. The institutional student organisation found in all the eight tertiary institutions in Harare is the SRC. Apart from the SRC, one college has the SRA. Student representative assembly, and the Electoral Committee. These institutional student governance organisations serve the interests of students in the specific locations of these tertiary institutions.

The national students’ governance organisations were ZITCOSA, ZINASU or ZIZAMA. Apart from that, the study found out that students can also participate in ZITUSA, a national student sport organisation for all the colleges in Zimbabwe. From the study it was learned that the national student governance organisations were there to represent the interests of all students across all the tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe.
The researcher observed that few female students were actively involved in students’ governance organisations. It was also discovered that female students participated in less influential positions in students’ governance organisations. One female student who is the President of the SRC at G College attended ZINASU or ZIZAMA meetings but she did not have an influential role in organisations because she is not an elected member of any of these organisations. It was learned that most female students in student governance organisations are occupied positions as Sports representatives, Food representatives or Entertainment representatives. However, none of the female students in Harare was standing as elected members in the Provincial or National Executive offices of ZINASU, ZICOSU, ZISTU or ZITUSA. The study also revealed that WUWA and Belvedere Teachers’ Colleges had more female students in student governance organisations as compared to others. Affirmative Action was identified as the reason why Morgan Teachers’ College and ATeachers’ Colleges had a fair representation of female students in students’ governance organisations.

The researcher also found out that although institutions in Harare possess SRC constitutions and gender policies, female students were still under represented in governance organisations or activities. A Teachers’ College is in the process of formulating its gender policy. Furthermore, it was discovered that C Polytechnic gender policy is still in its draft form. The researcher also observed that C Polytechnic, D Teachers’ College and B University gender policies had similar tactics meant to promote gender equality in the institutions. From the study it was realised that the SRC constitutions from all the tertiary institutions in Harare are not gender sensitive. The constitutions had a general mention of the right of every students to participate in students’ governance.
The study gathered that female students lack the freedom of expression during and after elections in their tertiary institutions. This was because male students used intimidation to scare away female students. The researcher also learned that factors such a supportive environment, leadership training and former leadership experience promote female students’ participation in students’ governance.

5.4 Summary of the Findings

- There were a few females occupying positions in SRC.
- Other student governing bodies mentioned were drama, debate, chess and sporting activities
- Most students prefer males for governance.
- There were positive factors influencing gender in institutions.
- There were also natal factors constraining female leadership.

Importance of gender equity:

- giving the organisation a balanced power
- harness potential human resource
- includes female in decision-making
- it brings dialogue between men and women
- women participate more in public life
- Most colleges do not have gender policies.
Strategies to alleviate problems basseting gender include:

• teaching children about gender at a young age

• looking at person with the lens that they are human beings and not female/male

• massive media campaign

• Gender equity to be made one of the education courses and to be examined.

• have organised debate on gender

• carry out gender impact assessment

• ensuring that policies and practises support gender equity

• set gender objectives

• Organisation to have goal spirit or political will.

• identifying individuals who are motivated and motivated in them

• create and support women in universities

• promote research on gender

• involve parents in gender
5.5 The Emergent Model

The Gender Emancipatory Theory

Upon a critical analysis of the findings a model for identifying and overcoming Challenges in student governing bodies has been proposed. This theory is an improvement on the liberal feminist theory. It does not throw away the ideas of liberal feminism, but it goes a step further to put theory into practice. The theory has been coined emancipator because it seeks to liberate the mind. Perpetuation of gender inequity needs to be eradicated. Emancipatory theory seeks to liberate the mind through education. In this context men seemed to have been dominating women involuntarily and women have yielded to subordination and dominance through the structures embodied in human life. The first step is that each institution must evaluate the challenges of gender equity through the following diagrammatical presentation.

![Diagram of Challenges of gender equity](image)

**Figure 1**
These steps could be followed

1. Review of gender myths

2. Females to pursue traditionally male dominated fields

3. Realisation of potentials

4. Need for support

5. Women empowerment

6. Overcoming challenges of gender equity

Review of gender myths

This step is needed to overcome the challenges of gender equity. Gender myths were socially constructed ideas which were accepted as the truth. The ideas were created in the minds and re-enforced by ceremonies, traditionally, practices, norms, values, ethics and culture. As a result, they limit women from realising their potentials. Females need to pursue traditionally male dominated fields. Emancipatory of gender inequality in the tertiary institutions would be a result of cooperation of all stakeholders. In the general sense emancipation is the fact or process of being set free from social legal or political bandage. In this context emancipation should make it possible for women to be human in the truest sense. Everything within her that craves assertion and activity should reach the fullest expression. In the leadership of student Governance bodies, all artificial barriers should be broken and the road towards greater freedom be cleared. Thus this model promotes equal opportunities for men and women and it helps to surmount cultural barriers in leadership. Gender norms and stereotypes have constrained the opportunities of women and men, girls and boys through different pathway. However most inequalities based on gender have historically put females at a
disadvantage. Therefore the oppressive contemporary societies must be exposed. In removing the gender myths, which range from access to employment, education, and political representation, their minds should undergo continuous transformation. This model promotes a process of learning through self-awareness. The Emancipation of females at an institution must be conquered by the females themselves. More women ought to be present in the assemblies to fashion cut policies and undertake programs to achieve gender Equity. Therefore Tertiary institutions should break the glass ceiling so that females can easily access management positions. This will therefore change the socio economic, political attitude and social structures and transform the factors which hinder females to participate in S.G.B.

**Realisation of potentials**

Full potential has to be realised through education. Education promotes the development or formation of character. According to Aristotle, Education should help people to discover their potentials. In order to improve our understanding of constrains that affect females in leadership participation, there should be an environment assessment of the barriers and potential opportunities. Each institution should allow women more space to take membership in organisation. Women are to be supported to form their own organisations. This would provide the platform for women to gain and enrich their experience which could be helpful to female participation. The gained experience will help them to compete with males more effectively and make significant gain on student governing bodies.

**Need for support**

Well achieving females should be given position as role models for the rest of the females. Society and the female students themselves should get awareness through realisation of potentials and gender heterogeneity in the tertiary institutions should be increased. Fellow women, family members, community should support females. The male students deserves
Support should be in form of intellectual, financial, spiritual and emotional expression. Well achieving females should be given position as role models for the rest of the females. Society and the female students themselves should get awareness through realisation of potentials; gender heterogeneity in the tertiary institutions should be increased.

Stage by stage approach Practical steps in applying the models to solve the problem of gender unequally in S.G. B.

1. Generating of information

There is need to collect information which shows what happening on the ground of the institution. Observation on Crimean for others and also the general philosophy of the institution regarding women issues is to be examined.

2. Dissemination of information

Make stakeholders aware of the information and implications. In so doing one gets responses. There is need to shed light of the future strategies. There might bring scorn, resistance and hesitation. However some will embrace the ideas.

3. Plan the practical activities

The practical activities can be holding of seminars and workshops. Effective speakers who are knowledgeable of the gender are in cooperated to facilities on workshops. During the workshops there is need to allow for brainstorming and summarising top outcomes of the seminars and workshops. There is to be cooperation and all stakeholders involved come up with resolutions for example identifying people with potential and areas they could lead and then motivate through support to participate in elections.
4. Evaluating policies

Finally institutional policies and regulations should be sensitized so that they respond to the national policies. There should be a comparativeness of constitutional provision to see if they are in tandem. The findings of this research holds precedence if they are not in tandem. Each institution must clearly have a mission statement on gender issues. There must be a goal of achieving gender equity in SGBs and female students must be encouraged to participate. Females themselves should organise and encourage self-organised learning processes about gender issues.

The different elements of the model are interlinked as reflected in the diagram. There must be effective communication by stakeholders. The critical aspect in the gender emancipatory theory is that women have to cultivate ambition even when all the impediments discussed in this thesis are remedied.

5.6 Conclusion

The aforementioned findings lead to the following conclusions. The study sought to establish the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions governing bodies so as to establish if there are any missing links in conditions fostering gender equity in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. The conclusion was based on the four research questions of this study. On the first question of the extend of gender equity The study confirmed that female students were participating in insignificant numbers in student governance organisations in tertiary institutions. Although some of the tertiary institutions have gender policies that sought to promote the participation of female students representation in students’ governance is still very low. In addition, SRC constitutions used in tertiary institutions were still gender insensitive in that they were not specifically mentioning the need for female students to participate in governance. On the factors surrounding tertiary
institution in Zimbabwe influence participation of females in student governing bodies. Promoting factors mentioned most were experience, leadership training and supportive environment. Among the factors that hinder female participation, issues of social stigma, verbal harassment and lack of motivation by female students were raised. All the participants expressed that gender equity was very critical and important to both sexes especially on making decisions which affect all.

On strategies which can be put in place to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies, females are to be supported in all aspects of their life so that they become motivated to take up leadership posts in student governing bodies.

5.7 Recommendations

Basing on the research conclusion, the researcher recommends that, the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should offer leadership training to female students so as to enhance their confidence and knowledge regarding participation in students’ governance. Male students should also be involved. The researcher also recommends that NGOs should offer leadership training to female students from the first year of their enrolment so that they get conversant with the requirements of leadership. This recommendation will close the gap on objective number one of the study which showed that extent of gender equity evident in the governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions is very low.

The researcher suggests that administration members in tertiary institutions should amend SRC constitutions and any other policies in their institutions so as to promote female
students’ involvement in major decision-making processes. Members of administration need to implement gender policies that are still in draft form or have not been fully implemented in the different tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions which have not formulated gender policies need to formulate policies in accordance with the National Gender and International Conventions which promote women’s empowerment.

On objective number two of the study which aimed to examine the factors surrounding tertiary institution in Zimbabwe and their influence on gender equity or inequity in student governing bodies. It is recommended that female students need to fight discrimination through supporting other female students who would be contesting or in elected positions in different student governance organisations in their institutions. Furthermore, female students need to be conversant with their policies for them to fight male students’ domination and intimidation. The researcher also recommends that female students need to attend institutional workshops or meetings for educating on student governance. Female students should vote and support other female students in students’ elections.

On objective number three of the study which aimed to find out the strategies that can be put in place to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governing bodies, The researcher endorses that administration members in tertiary institutions need to put punitive measures that deal with culprits of verbal or physical harassment in their institutions. They need to work with the law of the land to enforce justice to culprits. In addition, they also need to formulate and enforce a policy that female students have a higher representation in institutional or national student governance organisations. The researcher also recommends the need for the Zimbabwean government to support female students’ participation through implementing laws that specifically promote their participation. The government should also
offer financial support to female students willing to participate in students’ governance organisations so as to promote their confidence and willingness to engage in student governance organisations.

5.8 Recommendations for further Research

Completion of this study indicates a need for further research in some areas. These includes:

- Identifying how gender studies can be implemented in teachers’ colleges.
- Zimbabwe’s peculiarity on gender issues need to be further examined.
- Evaluating the affirmative policy.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This study interrogated challenges of gender equity in student governing bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutes. It was informed by a case study of Harare Province institutions. Chapter five closed the study by summarising the study and main findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations for the future.
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APPENDICES

Appendix (i): Informed Consent Agreement Form

Name of researcher: Mhlanga Ruth
Institution: Zimbabwe Open University
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Purpose of Study: To interrogate the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions governing bodies so as to see if there are any missing links in conditions fostering gender equity in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions.

Methodology: The qualitative research approach to be used in this study. It will use the interpretive paradigm. It shall focus on the importance of the researcher's perspective and the interpretative nature of social reality. The goal of interpretive research is to understand and interpret human behaviour. Thus, in this research, perceived ideas on the challenges of gender equity in tertiary institutions will be interpreted from views of participants in the research instruments. The qualitative research approach will be used. Krathwohl (2000) says a qualitative research approach permits the description of phenomena and events in an attempt to explain and understand them. The researcher shall focus on perceptions of the female and male students involved in the politics.

The study will focus on the challenges of gender equity in student governance organisations of tertiary institutions. The research is based on a case study of Harare Province. The
targeted, population consists of all students and Deans in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. 
The accessible population of this study consists of eight tertiary institutions.

The sample of this study will be derived from all students who hold positions in student governance bodies, final year student and the Deans of students in the ten tertiary institutions. The participants would be selected through purposive sampling. The researcher will first approach the Deans of students in each tertiary institute. Purposive sampling is the process whereby the researcher chooses particular elements from the population in order for them to be representative or informative about the research topic. The instruments to be used in this research are open ended questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The researcher will seek permission to carry out the study from the faculty. With the letter of introducing the researcher permission will be sought from the Minister of Higher and Tertiary institute. On arriving at each institute the researcher will produce a letter from Zimbabwe Open University. Data collection and analysis will occur simultaneously as an ongoing process through the inquiry (Creswell, 2005). Data analysis will consist of examining, categorizing tabulating and combining evidence to address the initial position of a study.

In this study the researcher will use triangulation data. Qualitative researcher's tool will be geared towards trustworthiness and will encompass issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (O’leary, 2004). Credibility is all about the internal validity, it will answer that the researcher has recorded accurately, analyzed and interpreted the phenomenon under study. In this study triangulation will undertake through many sources of collecting data which are open ended questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. The researcher will also examine previous studies to assess the points of agreement and disagreement. On dependability the study will be described in detail so that the researcher will assess the extent to which proper research practices were followed. On transferability, according to Shenton (2004), measures the extent to which the finding of the study can be
applied to other situations in this research. It will be established extending the types of sites and context in which the phenomenon is investigated. Mashonaland has government, private rural and urban set up tertiary institutions. Trustworthiness in qualitative research can mean that the findings of a study are a true reflection of what is in the case. LaBlanca (2010), defines trustworthiness as demonstrations that the evidence of the results reported is sound when the argument base is strong. In carrying out a research study, the researcher should be concerned with the well-being of the participants to protect them from being harmed. This also means that the researcher will avoid the exploitation of the participants. The researcher will seek informed consent by first seeking permission from the Deans of students.

**Research Ethics**

Persons who are willing to participate in this research should read the following information carefully so that they can make an informed decision about their participation.

**Conditions for participation**

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants should do so out of their own free will. The participant is free to withhold any information that they may decide not to share with the researcher or withdraw from the interview at any point if they feel like doing so for whatever reason.

**Protection accorded to participants**

1. **Confidentiality**: The research will uphold all participants’ right to confidentiality.

2. **Anonymity**: Names of regions, units and individuals will not be revealed. The research will instead, use pseudo names which may not in any way link the participants to the data collected.
3. **Risk**: There will not be any risk involved in participating in this research. Permission to conduct this research was granted by the Registrar of the Zimbabwe Open University.

**Data Analysis**

Data will be analysed using the content analysis techniques and thematic approach and presented in themes that emerge from the study.

**Use of data collected**

1. The end product of this study will be a Doctoral Thesis.
2. The data collected will be available for inspection by the Research Supervisor, the Research Degrees Committee, Internal Examiners of the Zimbabwe Open University and appointed External Examiners from other institutions.
3. It is envisaged that some of the chapters or the entire document will be published later on.
4. All information about the participants will be treated with strictest confidentiality and will not be revealed to anyone else except the persons noted unless required by law.

**Benefits and Compensation**

There are no direct benefits to any individual participant. However, this being a form of action research that seeks to improve practice, the participants will benefit from the results of the study as the university focuses on quality informed by their responses.

**Informed Consent**

The purpose of my participation has been clearly explained to me and has been made available to me. I understand what my participation entails and that it is voluntary. I will be allowed to ask questions and opt to withhold information that I may deem unfit to divulge. I
may withdraw from participation at any point without any penalty. I have read and understood the Informed Consent Agreement and I sign it freely and voluntarily and a signed copy has been given to me.

**Signature of volunteer participant:** ..................................................

**Date:** .............................................

**Signature of researcher/Agent:** ..................................................

**Date:** .............................................

**Contact details:** ..................................................
Appendix (ii): Interview Schedule for the Deans of Students

My name is Mhlanga Ruth. I am a PhD Candidate with the Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. The findings will be relevant to the policy makers in tertiary institutions and may lead to changes into the challenges of gender equality in student governance bodies. You are required to answer the question as honesty as you can support your views in all instances. Information will be treated as confidential. You have the right to withdraw any time you feel like. The interview takes about 30 minutes.

Extent of gender equity

1. How long have you been working for this College/ University?

2. What is the current enrolment for students in this institution how many are male and how many are female?

3. What has been the trend of SRC president’s sex for the past five years?

4. How do you define gender equity?

5. Do you think it exists at your institution in five governance bodies?

6. a. Besides SRC what are other students governing bodies at your institute?

   b. What is the purpose of each body?

7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

8. If yes what are the steps and procedures?

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?
10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

11. How are women leaders perceived by their counter pairs?

12. How do you ensure gender equity at your institute?

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

15. What are the factors at your institution which influences gender?

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

17. In your own view, do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

Importance of C

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?

21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?

Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution

22. What have you experienced as related to gender equity?

23. How can each problem be solved?
24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?
Appendix (iii): Questionnaire for Students in the SRC

My name is Mhlanga Ruth, I am a PhD Candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institution.

Please return the questionnaire within seven days. For any clarification of questions please contact the researcher on 0772 934 416.

General information on the participants

Sex:_________________ Age:___________________

University: ______________________________________________ -

Year of stay in University/College: ______________________________

Position held: __________________________________

Faculty: _________________________ Department: __________________________

Extent of gender equity:

Q.1. In what Academic year are you in?

A

Q. 2. In what student governance organisation are you in?

A

Q. 3. What post are you holding?

A
Q. 4. How did you step up to that post?

A

5. Why did you choose that position?

6. If you did not choose what really happened?

7. What is your understanding of gender equity?

8. In your view, what sex do students prefer as leaders at your institute?

9. Give the reasons for the sex chosen?

10. How ready are females to take up leadership posts in SRC?

11. Do female students campaign for posts in student governance bodies?

12. Does the administration of your college have clear policies on elections for SRCs in your institute?

13. Is the effectiveness of a leader influenced by gender?

14. Are other females in the SRC effective?

15. If the answer is yes, list three areas of their effectiveness.

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

16. To what extent is your office involved in strategic planning of your college?

17. Have you ever experienced an obstacle on your road to that post.

18. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

19. Have you ever experienced an obstacle as an SRC leader?
20. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

21. Are there any policies, acts or documents that promote female students’ participation in student governance?

22. What are the factors related to your institute which motivate participants in that position?

23. What are demotivating factors to those who want to participate in student governance at your college?

24. Do you think female students are influencing governance in your institution, if yes, how?

**Importance of gender equity in tertiary institutions**

25. What is the importance of gender equity at your institution?

26. What policies are put in place to cushion gender equity?

27. Does gender equity increase the effectiveness in the governance of SRC?

28. How do you share resources at your college?

29. Explain in your view critical issues which are not addressed at your college.

30. What do you think is the reason?

31. What should be done to promote female students’ participation in student governance?

32. Does a sexual harassment policy exist at your college?

33. Are gender issues taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women at your college?
Strategies to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies

34. How can gender equity be achieved?

35. What policies are put in place to promote gender equity at your college?

36. Which are the challenges faced by the institute in promoting gender equity?

37. How can these challenges be addressed?

38. Please make any comments that you believe are important to the issues that have been raised in the study.
Appendix (iv): Focus Group Protocol for students

Discussion duration ………………1 hrs.

Number of people ………………..6

Venue……………………………..

Group Task 1 (15 minutes)

The researcher will welcome and greet the participants as they arrive. Refreshments will be served. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study as well as assuring confidentiality.

Group Task 2 (10 minutes)

Each group member introduces her/himself and gives a preferred title she/he would want to use. The researcher will encourage each participant to make a contribution. The researcher will also spell out the manner in which the question and answers are given.

Interview Questions (1 hour 15 minutes)

1 Research

Extent of gender equity

1. What has been the trend of SRC president’s sex for the past five years?

2. How do you define gender equity?

3. Do you think it exists at your institution in five governance bodies?

6. a. Besides SRC what are other students governing bodies at your institute?

   b. What is the purpose of each body?
7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

8. If yes what are the steps and procedures?

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?

10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

11. How are women leaders perceived by their counter pairs?

12. How do you ensure gender equity at your institute?

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

15. What are factors at your institution which influence gender?

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

17. In your own view do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

Importance of C

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?

21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?
Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution

22. What have you experienced as related to gender equity?

23. How can each problem be solved?

24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?
Transcripts

Appendix (v): Interview Schedule for the Deans of Students

My name is Mhlanga Ruth. I am a PhD Candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe and Tertiary Institutions. The findings will be relevant to the policy makers in tertiary institutions and may lead to changes into the challenges of gender equality in student governance bodies. You are required to answer the question as honesty as you can support your views in all instances. Information will be treated as confidential. You have the right to withdraw any time you feel like. The interview takes about 30 minutes.

Extent of gender equity

1. How long have you been working for this College/ University?
A: 10 years

2. What is the current enrolment of students in this institution how many are male and how many are female?
A: 1 200

3. What has been the trend of SRC president’s sex for the past five years?
A: Male

4. How do you define gender equity?
A: Having equal opportunities

5. Do you think gender equity exists at your institution in five governance bodies?
A: Yes
6a. Besides SRC, what are other students governing bodies at your institute?

A: Drama, netball

b. What is the purpose of each body?

A: Netball

7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

A: Yes

8. If yes what are the steps and procedures?

A: Campaigns are held and names are given

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?

A: Yes

10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

A: Yes

11. How are women leaders perceive by their counterparts?

A: Emotional

12. How do you ensure gender equity at your institute?

A: Having workshops- giving goals

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

A: YES
14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?

A: They do not campaign

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

15. What are the factors at your institution which influence gender?

A: Leadership training, workshops

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

A: Social, cultural, economic

17. In your own view, do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

A: Yes because elections are done in a free and fair way

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

Importance of C

A: They do not want to discuss

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

A: To have balanced operation: to cater for every sex view

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?

A: Yes

21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?

A: Nothing
Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution

22. What have you experienced as related to gender equity?

A: Culture still constrain people

23. How can each problem be solved?

24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?

A: Each college must have a gender policy
Answers

Appendix (vi): Interview Schedule for the Deans of Students

My name is Mhlanga Ruth. I am a PhD Candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe and tertiary institutions. The findings will be relevant to the policy makers in tertiary institutions and may lead to changes into the challenges of gender equality in student governance bodies. You are required to answer the questions as honestly as you can to support your views in all instances. Information will be treated as confidential. You have the right to withdraw any time you feel like. The interview takes about 30 minutes.

Extent of gender equity

1. How long have you been working for this College/ University?

   A: 12 years

2. What is the current enrolment for students in this institution how many are male and how many are female?

   A: 1600

3. What has been the trend of SRC president’s sex for the past five years?

   A: Most males and vice females

4. How do you define gender equity?

5. Do you think gender equity exists at your institution in five governance bodies?

   A: No it does not

6a. Besides SRC what are other students governing bodies at your institute?
A: Clubs, sports, drama, arts, debate

b. What is the purpose of each body?

7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

A: Yes

8. If yes what are the steps and procedures?

A: The principal explains the purpose of SGB and people campaign and voting is carried out

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?

A: Yes

10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

A: Yes they are assertive and organised

11. How are women leaders perceive by their counterparts?

A: Emotional and weak

12. How do you ensure gender equity at your institute?

A: By encouraging females to campaign

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

A: Yes we need a president and vice from all sexes

14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?
Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

15. What are the factors at your institution which influences gender?

A: Leadership training and workshops

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

A: Sexual harassment, abuse by bad words and mockery

17. In your own view, do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

A: Yes. There are hostel representatives in each hostel and these representatives make decisions

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

A: They do not seriously evaluate the issues

Importance of C

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

A: It removes disadvantages for men too, facilitate good communication and the organisation will perform better.

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?

A: Yes through affirmative action but subtle gender inequity still persists

21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?

Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution
22. What have you experienced as related to gender equity?


23. How can each problem be solved?

A: Have policies. Administration set goals. Man knows how females feel.

24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?

A: There should be continuous assessment which is married to the national and international goals.
Answers

Appendix (vii): Questionnaire for Students in the SRC

My name is Mhlanga Ruth, I am a PhD Candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institution.

Please return the questionnaire within seven days. For any clarification of questions please contact the researcher on 0772 934 416

General information on the participants

Sex _________F___ Age: ___25____________________

University: _______University_______________________________________

Year of stay in University: _3___________________________

Position held: Minister of Religion ____________________________

Faculty: __Education___________ Department: ____________________________

Extent of gender equity:

Q.1. In what Academic year are you in?

A: 3

Q. 2. In what student governance organisation are you in?

A: SRC

Q. 3. What post are you holding?

A: Chairperson of Ministry of Religion
4. How did you step up to that post?

A: Voting

5. Why did you choose that position?

A: Background influence my parents are Z.A.O.G.A. deacons

6. If you did not choose what really happened?

7. What is your understanding of gender equity?

A: Sharing the same opportunities with female

8. In your view what sex do students prefer as leaders at your institute?

A: Male

9. Give the reasons for the sex chosen?

A: They are confident

10. How ready are females to take up leadership posts in SRC?

A: Most of them are not ready

11. Do female students campaign for posts in student governance bodies?

A: Yes but a few

12. Does the administration of your college have clear policies on elections for SRCs in your institute?

A: No

13. Is the effectiveness of a leader influenced by gender?
14. Are other females in the SRC effective?

A: Yes

15. If the answer is yes, list three areas of their effectiveness.

A: Cleanliness, planning and orderliness

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

16. To what extent is your office involved in strategic planning of your college?

A: To a greater extend

17. Have you ever experienced an obstacle on your road to that post?

A: Yes some friends discouraged me

18. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

A:

19. Have you ever experienced an obstacle as an SRC leader?

A: Yes people not complying to instructions

20. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

A: People not attending meetings

21. Are there any policies, acts or documents that promote female students participation in student governance?

A: No
22. What are the factors related to your institute which motivate participate in that position?

A: Leadership training

23. What are de-motivating factors to those who want to participate is student governance at your college?

A: Religion, early marriage, finances

24. Do you think female students are influencing governance in your institution, if yes, how?

A: Yes they clean up kitchen with zeal

Importance of gender equity in tertiary institutions

25. What is the importance gender equity at your institution?

A: Sharing ideas, enlarge the pool for getting more ideas

26. What policies are put in place to cushion gender equity?

A: No

27. Does gender equity increase the effectiveness in the governance of SRC?

A: Yes

28. How do you share resources at your college?

A: Through fees

29. Explain in your view critical issues which are not addressed at your college.
30. What do you think is the reason?

31. What should be done to promote female students participation in student governance?
A: Encourage them. Involve them in goal formulation, workshops

32. Does a sexual harassment policy exist at your college?
A: No

33. Are gender issues taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women at your College?

Strategies to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies

34. How can gender equity be achieved?
A: Emulating other females, Presidents, holding workshops, working with men

35. What policies are put in place to promote gender equity at your college?
A: No policies

36. Which are the challenges faced by the institute in promoting gender equity?
A: Finances

37. How can these challenges be addressed?
A: Donors and government to intervene and support female teacher

38. Please make any comments that you believe are important to the issues that has been raised in the study.
A: Gender equity is not only important but the right thing to do. Answers
Appendix (viii): Questionnaire for Students in the SRC

My name is Mhlanga Ruth, I am a PhD Candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. I am carrying out a study on the challenges of gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwean tertiary institution.

Please return the questionnaire within seven days. For any clarification of questions please contact the researcher on 0772 934 416.

General Information on the Participants

Sex: _F_____ Age: ___32____________________

University: _____College__________________________________________

Year of stay in University: ________________________

Position held: _Food Committee Department________

Faculty: ____H.E._______ Department: Education ______________

Extent of gender equity:

Q.1. In what academic year are you in?

A: 3\textsuperscript{RD} year

Q. 2. In what student governance organisation are you in?

A: Food Committee Department

3. What post are you holding?

A: Chairperson

4. How did you step up to that post?
5. Why did you choose that position?

A: Because I like cooking and maintaining order in the kitchen

6. If you did not choose what really happened?

A: Nothing but I like helping people in kitchen

7. What is your understanding of gender equity?

A: Are the socially constructed roles for either female or male

8. In your view what sex do students prefer as leaders at your institute?

A: males

9. Give the reasons for the sex chosen?

A: Because females are jealousy of their sex so these females may rather vote for the opposite sex.

10. How ready are females to take up leadership posts in SRC?

A: They are not ready due to structures

11. Do female students campaign for posts in student governance bodies?

A: Yes

12. Does the administration of your college have clear policies on elections for SRCs in your institute?

A: Yes
13. Is the effectiveness of a leader influenced by gender?

A: Yes sometimes it is influenced but depending on the post being led

14. Are other females in the SRC effective?

A: Yes

15. If the answer is yes, list three areas of their effectiveness.

A: Food committee, secretary and finance committee

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

16. To what extent is your office involved in strategic planning of your College.

A: To a greater extend.

17. Have ever experienced an obstacle on your road to that post.

A: No I did not

18. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

A:

19. Have you ever experienced an obstacle as an SRC leader?

A: Yes

20. If yes, elaborate and give examples.

A: People are jealousy so sometimes they talk the wrong things

21. Are there any policies, acts or documents that promote female students’ participation in student governance?
A: No

22. What are the factors related to your institute which motivate participants in that position?

A: I am involved in the H.E. Department

23. What are de-motivating factors to those who want to participate is student governance at your college?

A: Sexual harassment and negative attitude of other female students

24. Do you think female students are influencing governance in your institution, if yes, how?

A: Yes they sometimes organise the cleaning of surroundings.

Importance of gender equity in tertiary institutions

25. What is the importance of gender equity in your institution?

A: It makes the different ideas of different sexes to be put together

26. What policies are put in place to cushion gender equity?

A: None

27. Does gender equity increase the effectiveness in the governance of SRC?

A: Yes most of the female grievances are also explained

28. How do you share resources at your college?

A: Through the paying of fees.
29. Explain in your view critical issues which are not addressed at your college.

A: Issues of sexual harassment and sanitation

30. What do you think is the reason?

A: Gender issues are not discussed openly

31. What should be done to promote female students participation in student governance?

A: Encourage them: have goal of 50-50

32. Does a sexual harassment policy exist at your college?

A: No

33. Are gender issues taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women at your college?

A: No

Strategies to alleviate problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies

34. How can gender equity be achieved?

A: Anyone can take any position.

35. What policies are put in place to promote gender equity at your college?

A: N/A

36. Which are the challenges faced by the institute in promoting gender equity?

A: Finances: knowledge.
37. How can these challenges be addressed?

A: Workshops and having one goal spirit by everyone in the college.

38. Please make any comments that you believe are important to the issues that has been raised in the study.

A: Persistence of gender inequity must come to an end.
Answers

Appendix (ix): Focus Group Protocol for Students

Discussion duration .............. 1 hrs.

Number of people .............. 6

Venue ................................

Group Task 1 (15 minutes)

The researcher will welcome and greet the participants as they arrive. Refreshments will be served. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study as well assuring confidentiality.

Group Task 2 (10 minutes)

Each group member introduces her/himself and gives a preferred title she/he would want to use. The researcher will encourage each participant to make a contribution. The researcher will also spell out the manner in which the question and answers are given.

Interview Questions (1 hour 15 minutes)

1 Research

Extent of gender equity

1. What has been the trend of SRC president’s sex for the past five years?

2. How do you define gender equity?

3. Do you think it exists at your institution in five governance bodies?
6a. Besides SRC what are other students governing bodies at your institute?

b. What is the purpose of each body?

7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

8. If yes what are the steps and procedures?

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?

10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

11. How are women leaders perceive by their counterparts?

12. How do you ensure gender equity at your institute?

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?

Factors surrounding tertiary institutions and their influence on gender

15. What are the factors at your institution which influences gender?

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

17. In your own view do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

Importance of C

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?
21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?

**Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution**

22. What have you experienced as challenges related to gender equity?

23. How can each problem be solved?

24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?
Appendix (x): Focus Group Protocol for Students

Discussion duration………………1hrs.

Number of people………………..6

Venue……………………………..

Group Task 1 (15 minutes)
The researcher will welcome and greet the participants as they arrive. Refreshments will be served. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study as well as assuring confidentiality.

Group Task 2 (10 minutes)
Each group member introduces her/himself and gives a preferred title she/he would want to use. The researcher will encourage each participant to make a contribution. The researcher will also spell out the manner in which the question and answers are given.

Interview Questions (1 hour 15 minutes)

1 Research

Extent of gender equity

1. What has been the trend of S.R.C president’s sex for the past five years?
2. How do you define gender equity?
3. Do you think it exists at your institution in five governance bodies?

6a. Besides SRC what are the other students governing bodies at your institute?
b. What is the purpose of each body?

7. Are there clear steps and procedures taken for one to be a leader in the governing bodies?

8. If yes, what are the steps and procedures?

9. Do you think sex of a leader can affect the attitude of people being led?

10. Do you think females have different leadership styles from males?

11. How are women leaders perceive by their counterparts?

12. How do you ensure gender equity in your institute?

13. Do you consider gender equity as Deans?

14. What is your opinion on the few females in student governance bodies?

Factors surrounding tertiary institution and their influence on gender

15. What are the factors at your institution which influences gender?

16. What type of constraints are females facing as women leaders?

17. In your own view, do you think this institution is supportive of female student participation in decision-making process, elaborate?

18. What is the attitude of community members towards gender issues?

Importance of C

19. According to you, what is the importance of gender equity at a tertiary institute?

20. Has the Zimbabwean education system managed to encourage gender equity?

21. What policies are put in place in your college to address gender inequity?
Strategies of alleviating problems besetting gender equity in student governance bodies of Zimbabwe tertiary institution

22. What have you experienced as challenges related to gender equity?

23. How can each problem be solved?

24. How can the available policies be developed to enhance participation of female students in governance bodies?
Ref: HD/21

09 April 2015

To whom it may concern

RE: MRS RUTH MHLANGA’S REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO FIELD RESEARCH IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT.

The bearer of this letter, Mrs Ruth Mhlanga is a doctoral candidate with Zimbabwe Open University. She is to present a thesis as required of her to be awarded the degree but she has to do field research in her area of gender studies focusing on leadership and student affairs. Faculties of Education and departments such as Students Affairs house the populations of major interest to her. To facilitate her work, she needs to generate data from institution like universities and colleges. Please help Mrs. Mhlanga by granting her permission to interact with participants of the said faculties and department in your universities and colleges

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Adolph Chikasha

DIRECTOR: HIGHER DEGREE DIRECTORATE
15 June 2015

Mrs Ruth Kutiva Mhlanga
Nyadire Teachers College
P.O. Box 210
Mutoko

Dear Mrs Ruth Kutiva Mhlanga

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON: "THE CHALLENGES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN STUDENT GOVERNING BODIES OF ZIMBABWEAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS"

Reference is made to your letter, in which you request for permission to carry out an educational research on: "The Challenges of Gender Equality in Student Governing Bodies of Zimbabwean Tertiary Institutions".

Accordingly, be advised that the head of Ministry has granted permission for you to carry the research at Seke Teachers’ College, Morgan ZINTEC, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Open University and the Catholic University of Zimbabwe.

However, please note that you still have to seek permission from the universities that you want to include in your research.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the ministry. Accordingly, it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the permanent secretary with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the Ministry’s strategic planning process.

M. J. Chirapa (Ms)

For: PERMANENT SECRETARY

cc Mrs M. Muguti - Director Higher Education Programmes
    Mr J.T. Dewah –Director Tertiary Education Programmes
    Principals: Seke Teachers’ College, Morgan ZI’ TEC