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## Exploring College-Based Policy Formulation Processes in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe for the Promotion of Student Friendly Environments

\*<sup>1</sup>Alexander Katiyo\*<sup>1</sup>Vice Principal, Department of Education, Nyadire College of Education, Zimbabwe.

### Abstract

The study explored college-based policy formulation processes in an effort to enhance student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The study sought to establish key stakeholders involved in policy formulation, college-based policy formulation procedures and processes that enhance the promotion of student friendly environments. The study involved two cases: a church-run and a state-run teachers' colleges. The survey questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from a sample of 543 students. Semi-structured in-depth questions were used to collect qualitative data from 15 Student Representative Council (SRC) members and 15 College Academic Board (CAB) members through focus group discussions, and face-to-face interviews with the 2 principals of the teachers' colleges. The study established that the government, principals, CAB members, advisory council members and SRC members were key stakeholders in teachers' colleges policy formulation. Further, four interdependent formulation procedures emerged from the study. These were college-based agenda setting, stakeholder consultation, policy writing and the ratification process. Results also revealed that the formulators did not religiously adhere to government policy frameworks and that students were lowly involved, which constrained the promotion of student friendly environment. The study recommends more involvement of the student body and adherence to government policy frameworks in the formulation processes in order to enhance the promotion of student friendly environments.

**Keywords:** College-based policy, stakeholder, policy formulation process, student teacher, student friendly environment, teachers' college

### 1. Introduction

The policy formulation process is a multifaceted activity that involves engagement of several teachers' colleges' key stakeholders. These stakeholders should include the student body, lecturing and non-lecturing staff, Students Representative Council (SRC), principals, advisory council members and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology. Ideally, the policy formulation process should aim at enabling teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe create student friendly environments which support the academic, social and emotional needs of student teachers. The college-based policy formulation process should take cognisance of factors which include the participation of key stakeholders, (Onkware, 2015) <sup>[18]</sup>. In the context of this study, the government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, provides the policy frameworks within which college-based policies in teachers' colleges are formulated (Maria, 2016) <sup>[13]</sup>. The author further asserts that government policy frameworks are intended to provide direction to the policy formulation processes in order to regulate physical, social and academic environments which are user friendly to the student teachers. The policy frameworks also facilitate policy decision-making and define areas of operation during the formulation process. Okoroma

(2014) <sup>[16]</sup> advocates that effective management of student teachers' welfare in teachers' colleges is grounded on well-formulated policies which tap the fundamental principles that provide enabling environments that improve academic progress, encourage free co-curricular participation and social interactions among the students and staff members. Despite earlier researches carried out by UNICEF on the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) concept on Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and in primary schools (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013) <sup>[14]</sup>, the concept of college-based policy formulation process that anchors on how the procedures promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges remains a grey area (Eneanya, Belo and Anifowose, 2018) <sup>[8]</sup>. Of significance is the fact that, in all the aforementioned researches, no specific attention was given to teachers' colleges policy formulation processes for the promotion of student friendly environments in Zimbabwe. Thus, the exploration of college-based policy formulation processes for the promotion of student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe is paramount.

#### 1.1. Statement of the Research Problem

The complexity in promoting student friendly environments in teachers' colleges through college-based policy formulation processes is explored in order to come up with enhanced

processes that promote socially, physically and academically student friendly environments. Spillane, Reiser and Reims, (2002) [23] assert that, college-based policy formulation process that is a purview of the elite is constrained. The assertion implies that, involvement of key stakeholders during policy formulation has the potential of promoting student friendly environments. Literature has shown knowledge gaps on policy formulation processes that constrain the promotion of student friendly environments (Bell and Stevenson, 2015) [2]. It is from this background that this study explored college-based policy formulation processes in order to enhance the promotion of student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The study sought to explore the involvement of teachers' colleges key stakeholders, the fundamentals in policy formulation procedures, level of student body involvement and factors that enhance the policy formulation processes in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe which should promote student friendly environments.

### 1.2. Research Question

To what extent do the college-based policy formulation processes enhance the promotion of student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe?

#### • Sub-Research Questions

- i). Who are the key stakeholders involved in college-based policy formulation processes in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe?
- ii). What are the procedures for college-based policy formulation processes that promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe?
- iii). How can the policy formulation process in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe be enhanced for the promotion of student friendly environments?

## 2. Literature Review

Literature reviewed included the meaning of policy formulation, the key stakeholders in teacher education and factors that influence policy formulation processes.

- i). **The Meaning of Student Friendly Environments:** Bell and Stevenson (2015) [2] assert that, a student friendly environment ensures a surrounding that is socially inclusive; free from danger and psychologically enabling. The author further highlights that it refers to a physical and psychological surrounding that ensures physically safe, emotionally secure and socially enabling college environments. Student friendly environment in this study context, refers to conducive policies; conditions; psychological (emotional) and social settings and offered services that recognise human rights and provisions of positive welfare to student teachers.
- ii). **The Meaning of Policy Formulation Process:** A policy formulation process refers to the selection of courses of action intended to regulate physical, social and academic environments in institutions of higher learning (Anderson, 2013) [1]. In the context of this paper, the process of formulating college-based policies in teachers colleges involves the identification of courses of action in response to the government of Zimbabwe's policy of implementing the student friendly environment concept. Parsons (2014) [19], asserts that the policy formulation process legalises parameters on how policy formulators should promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges. The author further says that the policy formulation processes are characterised by activities such as stakeholder opinion seeking, policy expert's

consultations and writing of the policies. Okoroma (2014) [16], argues that when the policy formulation process does not involve key stakeholders, it constraints the promotion of student friendly environments. Thus, in the context of this study the policy formulation process refers to the legal expression of the teachers' colleges' goals of what should be done to promote student friendly environments.

- iii). **Key Stakeholders in Teachers' Colleges:** Key stakeholders in teachers' colleges include the following:
  - a) **Student Teachers:** Student teachers are key stakeholders in teachers' colleges because they are the consumers of teacher education, who should enjoy college services (Duze, 2014) [7]. In most circumstances the student teachers constitute the larger population in teachers' colleges, hence, they are supposed to be given more space to contribute meaningfully through their leadership structures during policy formulation. Further, the student teachers are directly affected by the environments which the policies produce, hence they should be involved in the policy formulation process (Berry & Berry, 2013; Jones, 2014) [4, 9]. It is from these observations that this study sought to explore the level of students' involvement during policy formulation, in order to enhance the promotion of student friendly environments.
  - b) **Staff Members:** The lecturing and non-lecturing staff members in the teachers' colleges are also key stakeholders, because they are the service providers who should play a significant part in policy formulation processes. Their involvement during policy formulation provides usable policy outcomes that enhance the promotion of student friendly environments. Barret and Fudge (2013) [3], assert that in teachers colleges, the roles of lecturers, accounts staff, grounds personnel, canteen staff and library staff are fundamental during college-based policy formulation processes. The study investigates the level of participation of the lecturing and non-lecturing staff members during policy formulation in order to emerge with plausible processes.
  - c) **The Ministry:** The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, is a key stakeholder, which provides policy frameworks that guide how teachers' colleges should promote student friendly environments (Selle, 2014; Anderson, 2013) [21, 1]. Budd (2013) [6], propounds that every policy formulation process in teachers' colleges requires the guidance of the government before the policies are implemented. The ministry, as a key stakeholder, should be the basis of policy formulation processes in teachers' colleges. Literature shows that smooth policy formulation processes, as guided by the ministry frameworks, produce policies that are user-friendly (Selle, 2014) [21]. Thus, the government a key stakeholder, should be involved in the formulation process.
  - d) **The College Administrators:** According to the Manpower Development Act of Zimbabwe, chapter 28:02, the college administrators are key stakeholders in teachers' colleges. These include the principal, heads of departments and lecturers in charge of subjects, who constitute the College Academic Board (CAB). The act further explains that, CAB is the supreme board in the college that has high influence in policy decisions.
  - e) **The College Advisory Council:** The college advisory council members are drawn from the civic society (SI 81

of 1999). The SI 81 of 1999, spells out that the advisory members are selected from prominent business persons, alumina, lawyers, principals of sister colleges, senior members from sister ministries and the president of the student representative council.

- f) **The Responsible Authority:** In church-run teachers' college, the education secretary represents the responsible authority. They are key stakeholders who provide policy frameworks in line with the church's interests.

#### iv). Policy Formulation Process Considerations that Promote Student Friendly Environments

In the promotion of student friendly environments through policy formulation, the policy formulators should be pre-occupied with the rationality and justifiability of their policy formulation procedures (Owolabi, 2016) [17]. By this the author means that policy formulation should meet the clients' needs. Further, the author asserts that, fundamental considerations such as desirability, justness and effectiveness assist in formulating user-friendly policies that promote student friendly environments. These fundamental factors are briefly presented as this sub-section unfolds.

- a) **Desirability:** Desirability means the state of being user-friendly (Owolabi, 2016) [17]. The policy formulation process should be focused on a particular purpose that caters for the desires of the students in terms of their values, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours they wish to inculcate into the students (Budd, 2013) [6]. In the same vein, the policy formulation processes should take cognisance of the social, physical and academic needs of the student teachers. In the context of this paper, it implies that the desires of the student teachers, which include students' rights and inclusivity which promote student friendly environments, should be at the centre of all policy formulation considerations.

- b) **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness refers to the skill of coming up with policies which support the implementation of student friendly environments (Budd, 2013) [6]. Policy formulation process goals should be clearly stated to communicate the intended direction to the student teachers, in order to enhance student friendly environments (Berry and Berry, 2013) [4]. The authors further argue that the legal jargon that policy formulation experts sometimes use to communicate policy statements to the lay people, carries no meaning at all in the cognition of the policy beneficiaries. This assertion suggests that, there should be no ambiguity in the way policy goals are expressed to ensure effective implementation and to provide conducive environments for the students.

- c) **Justness:** Justness refers to the conformity to standards of correctness and lawfulness (Owolabi, 2016) [17]. Berry and Berry (2013) [4], assert that, for the policies to be relevant, the policy formulation process should involve the key stakeholders. In this study's context, the policy formulation process should include the needs and aspirations of the student teachers in an endeavour to promote student friendly environments. During the policy formulation process, the government policy frameworks should be adhered to in an effort to enhance the justness of the policy.

In summary, in order to promote student friendly environments through college-based policy formulation,

the aspects of desirability, effectiveness and justness are expected to characterise the policy formulation process.

- v). **The Policy Formulation Process:** The policy formulation process refers to the development of specific policy options within a framework (Budd, 2013; Owolabi, 2016) [6, 17]. The authors identified four general steps in the policy formulation process. The steps are: selecting desired policy objectives; identifying target policy objectives; determining the pathway to achieve the objectives and coming up with to the policy outcomes. This study explored formulation processes that enhance the promotion of student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed the Mixed Methods Approach that used the descriptive survey method in which two cases, church-run and state-run teachers' colleges were involved. The target population of this study was 242 policy formulators and 6 600 student teachers. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 32 policy formulators, while a sampling size format at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error as given by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2009) [20], was used for simple random selection of the students' sample size of 543. The two categories of sample sizes are shown in Table 1.

#### 3.1. Sample Size of Participants

Table 1: Sample size of policy formulators and student teachers

Teachers' College	Sample Size of Policy Formulators			Sample Size of Student Teachers	
	Principals	CAB Members	SRC Members	Students' FREQ.	%
Church-run	1	8	8	252	46.4
State-run	1	7	7	291	53.6
Totals	2	15	15	543	100%

Key: CAB-College Academic Board; SRC-Student Representative Council

#### 3.2. Research Instruments

The study used two instruments. Semi-structured in-depth interview questions were used to gather qualitative data through focus group discussions with CAB members and SRC members, and face-to-face interviews were used with principals. Survey questionnaires with responses rated in Likert scale of 1 to 5 collected quantitative data from student teachers who were on campus. Descriptive responses were analysed using Atlati8.ti while quantitative data were analysed using IBMSPPSS version 21 software, to come up with themes. Participants provided data on college-based policy formulation procedures, key stakeholders involved during policy formulation, limitations that constrain the policy formulation process and ways that may enhance the promotion of student friendly environments. Qualitative and quantitative results were concurrently discussed and conclusions drawn in the interpretive discussion section.

### 4. Results

Qualitative and quantitative data are presented concurrently as the section unfolds.

#### 4.1. Stakeholders and their Roles in College-Based Policy Formulation in Zimbabwe

**Table 2:** Participants' responses on stakeholders' involvement and their roles in policy formulation process

Responses on Key stakeholders involved in policy formulation in Teachers' colleges	
Church-run Teachers college	State-run Teachers college
<p>P1: "Key stake holders in church-run colleges include the education secretary, the principal, CAB members, the Advisory council and the government."</p> <p>FG1CAB6: "The stake holders involved include the principal, vice principal, CAB members and sometimes the SRC members."</p> <p>FG1SRC3: "I think the principal, staff members and SRC are key stakeholders in college policy formulation but we are not involved directly"</p> <p>FG1SRC 6: "In fact, the principal, CAB members and the responsible authority (church) are responsible for policy formulation at this college."</p>	<p>P2: "This is a government teachers' college, so the principal, vice principal, CAB members and the Advisory council members are key in policy formulation."</p> <p>FG2CAB7: "Based on my knowledge, the principal, CAB member, government, vice principal, and advisory members are key in policy formulation"</p> <p>FG2CAB5: "My experience, the principal, vice principal, advisory council and CAB members are key in policy formulation in the college."</p> <p>FG2SRC4: "The student body is not involved, only the principal, CAB members and advisory members are involved."</p>
Responses on the Roles of Key Stakeholders in Policy Formulation in Teachers colleges	
Church-run Teachers college	State-run Teachers college
<p>FG1SrcM3: "The advisory council regulates college-based policies during formulation and advise accordingly."</p> <p>FG1CAB 1: "The role of the CAB is to write and ratify the policies in line with the government frameworks."</p> <p>FG1SRC7: "The SRC has the responsibility of coordinating during consultation among the students."</p> <p>P1: "As principal, I coordinate, consult, chair CAB meetings and give direction during policy formulation process."</p> <p>FG1SRC6: "Sometimes the SRC president and the vice SRC president during policy consultation and formulation."</p> <p>P1: "The government gives policy framework on how to formulate policies that promote student friendly environments."</p>	<p>FG2Src5: "As SRC, we assist in coordinating students during policy consultations by the principal, especially during principal's hour."</p> <p>FG2Src4: "I think the SRC assist in making order among the students when the principal wants to meet them during policy opinion seeking."</p> <p>FG2CAB 4: "The major role of the CAB is ratification of college policies."</p> <p>P2: "The principal initiates, align college policies with government frameworks and signs them to be legal documents."</p> <p>FG2 CAB 5: "In my view, the advisory council gives advice and moderates the formulation process."</p> <p>FG2Src3 The SRC President and Vice President represent the whole council during policy formulation.</p>

**Key:** FG2CAB1 = Focus Group 2 College Academic Board; FG2SrcM= Focus Group 2 Student Representative Council member; P2 = Principal of a state-run teachers' college; FG1CAB1 = Focus Group 1 College Academic Board; FG1SrcM= Focus Group 1 Student Representative Council member; P1 = Principal of a church-run teachers' college

Table 2 shows that P1 and P2 highlighted that the key stakeholders involved in college-based policy formulation are the principal, CAB members and advisory council members. CAB and SRC members of the two teachers' colleges echoed that the SRC and the student body were also stakeholders, but were not directly involved. Further, FG1SRC 6 indicated that, in the church-run teachers' college, the responsible authority (church) was a key stakeholder in policy formulation. P1 and FG2CAB7 also concurred that the government is a key stakeholder, as it provides the policy frameworks in teachers colleges in Zimbabwe. Further, results in Table 2 show specific roles of five key stakeholders in policy formulation in church-run and state-run teachers' colleges as presented below.

- a) The Role of the government:** Results in Table 2 indicate that the government provides policy frameworks that regulate the formulation of policies in church-run and state-run teachers' colleges.
- b) The Role of the Principal:** Results in Table 2 indicate that the principals coordinated policy formulation processes, hence they influenced the outcomes of policies

that promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges.

- c) The Role of the College Academic Board:** Table 2, FG1CAB 1 and FG2CAB2 indicate that the role of CAB members includes policy writing and ratification, as regulated by the government policy frameworks to promote student friendly environments.
- d) The Role of Student Representative Council:** FG2Src3 and FG1Src6 highlight that the role of the SRC president and vice president was to represent the whole council during policy formulation in teachers' colleges. Results in Table 2, further revealed that the role of the SRC in policy decision making was to assist in coordinating students during policy consultations, in order to capture the social, academic and physical needs of the students.
- e) The Role of the Advisory Council:** FG1SrcM3 and FG2CAB2 highlighted that, the Advisory Council's role was to give advice to the principal, and give guidance to college-based policy formulation processes for the promotion of student friendly environments.

## 4.2. Policy Formulation Procedures that Promote Student Friendly Environments in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe

**Table 3:** Responses on policy formulation procedures in teachers' colleges

Responses on policy formulation procedures	
Church-run Teachers college	State-run Teachers college
FG1CAB6: "The stages followed during the formulation starts from when the college receives some policy frame work from the government, more information is sought from key stakeholders; drafts are crafted by specific departments then ratification is done by the CAB members." FG1SrcM1: "At our SRC level we are not aware of formulation stages that are taken through until they are evaluated." P1: "Our college policies follow a sequence that starts from wide consultation from students during principal's hour sessions, meetings with SRC, drafts are written and go through ratification as we align to government policy frame works." FG1Src4: "The dean in most cases represent the students in college-based policies matters." FG1Src3: "I noted that at times government policy frameworks are not followed by our formulators."	FG2CAB7: "Based on my knowledge, the stages we go through include policy information seeking during principal's hour with students. Departments also bring policy issues draft and a subcommittee is tasked to make policy drafts which then are presented to CAB for ratification." P2: "The stages we follow include these, we set subcommittees to look into specific policies, they draft, Academic Board meets to scrutinize and ratify these policies, then I sign them as Principal." FG2Src5: "We hold SRC meetings in which the dean of students sits and deliberate issues that concerns students and we forward the issues to the principal in the form of minutes." FG2Src6: "We are not quite sure of the stages because SRC as a whole is not involved at formulation but mostly during implementation." FG2CAB4: "Colleges are autonomous so government policy frameworks are not that strictly followed but they guide us."

**Key:** FG1CAB1 = Focus Group 1 College Academic Board; FG1SrcM= Focus Group 1 Student Representative Council member; P1 = Principal of a church-run teachers' college; FG2CAB1 = Focus Group 2 College Academic Board FG2SrcM= Focus Group 2 Student Representative Council member; P2 = Principal of a state-run teachers' college

Results in Table 3 show that principals, CAB members and SRC members of the two teachers' colleges highlighted the following four interdependent policy formulation procedures:

**Procedure 1: College-Based Policy Agenda Setting:** this refers to setting policy actions, making critical decisions and predictions that are intended to influence the policy outcomes. Principals, CAB members and SRC members explained that agenda setting emanates from both the government policy frameworks and ideas from key stakeholders.

**Procedure 2: College-Based Policy Opinion Seeking (Consultations):** Principals and CAB members of the two teachers' colleges, highlighted that opinion seeking was a stage in which policy formulators make stakeholder consultations. The SRC members highlighted that the student body was not involved directly, except during the principal's hour sessions, where policy issues were discussed.

**Procedure 3: Policy Drafting (Writing):** Participants explained that, stage three is when a sub-committee of formulator's document collected policy items into a policy draft.

**Procedure 4: College-Based Policy Ratification:** Principals and CAB members of the church-run and state-run teachers' colleges explained that the ratification stage is when the

drafted college-based policies are presented, debated and ratified by CAB members. Further, CAB members of the two teachers' colleges echoed that, no SRC members were involved and that the principal endorsed the policies for them to become binding policies of the institution. Further, results in Table 3, FG1 Src3 and FG2CAB4 highlight that in some cases the formulators did not adhere to government policy frameworks.

Overall, the results showed that college-based policy formulation processes in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe follow sequenced procedures. The procedures include policy agenda setting; opinion seeking; writing and ratification in order to come up with policies that promote student friendly environments. Further, it was revealed ministry policy frameworks were not always adhered to.

### 4.3. Involvement of Student Teachers in Policy Formulation Processes in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe

In terms of the college-based policy formulation processes, the student teachers were asked on their level of agreement with the statements on their involvement. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Involvement of student teachers during college-based policy formulation processes\

	Item	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree		
Church-run	Formulators involve and solicit students' views	252	36 (14.3%)	50 (19.8%)	85(33.7%)	63 (25%)	18 (7.1%)	2.91	1.1412
	There are policy formulation channels that involve students	252	19(7.5%)	28(11.1%)	30(11.9%)	108(42.9%)	67 (26.6%)	3.70	1.1927
State-run	Formulators involve and solicit students' views	291	42 (14.4%)	75(25.8%)	85(29.2%)	71(24.4%)	18 (6.2%)	2.82	1.1397
	There are policy formulation channels that involve students	291	23(7.9%)	35 (12%)	39 (13.4%)	113 (38.8%)	81(27.8%)	3.67	1.2243

**Key:** N= Number of sample participants; SRC= Student Representative Council; Criterion Mean = 3 and above indicates significant involvement in this section of the study; Standard Deviation (SD) measures the decision dispersion from the mean score in the study.

Table 4 presents results of responses of the participants from the two teachers' colleges on the two items on a 5-point Likert scale. On the aspect of college-based policy

formulators involving student teachers and soliciting their views, in the church-run teachers' college, those who agreed were 25% and strongly agreed scored 7.1% with a mean score

of 2.91 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.1412. This means that, most of the student teachers in the church-run teachers' college felt that they were not involved and consulted during the formulation process of the college-based policies. Similarly, the state-run teachers' college, scored 24.4% on agreed and 6.2% strongly agreed that they were consulted with a mean score of 2.82 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.1397. These results show that most of the student teachers in state-run teachers' college were not involved and consulted as well. On whether there were policy formulation channels that involve students, results in Table 4, show that in the church-run college, 42.9% agreed and 26.6% strongly agreed, giving an average of 69.5% agreement score, with a mean score of 3.70 and SD of 1.1927. This showed that student representative council channels were fairly consulted in the formulation of the college-based policies. In the state-run teachers' college, 38.8% of the participants agreed and 27.8% strongly agreed that there were students' channels that involved SRC members, giving an overall agreement percentage of 66.6% with a mean score of 3.67 and SD of 1.2243 on the same aspect. These results, therefore, show that student teacher participants agreed that they were fairly involved during college-based policy formulation through their Student Representative Council channels.

Although overall findings established that the two teachers' colleges had student representative council channels which were fairly involved, the student body was not involved and consulted during policy formulation processes, hence the promotion of student friendly environment was constrained to some extent.

#### 4.4. Processes that Enhance College-based Policy Formulation to Promote Student Friendly Environments

Data on policy formulation processes that enhance the promotion of student friendly environments are presented in the sub-section that follows. The data were collected using the questionnaire and through focus group discussions with students and policy formulators.

**a) College-Based Policy Formulation Processes that Promote Student Friendly Environments in Teachers' Colleges, in Zimbabwe:** For the college-based policy formulation processes that enhance the promotion of student friendly environments, the students were asked on their level of agreement with the statements as shown in Table 5. The layout of the responses in Table 5 is by teachers college and on two, 5-point Likert scale items.

**Table 5:** Policy formulation processes that enhance student friendly environments

Teachers' college	Rating scale	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree		
Church-run	Engagement of students in policy formulation demonstrate policy beneficiaries' needs	252	33 (13.1%)	41 (16.3%)	50 (19.8%)	107 (42.5%)	21 (8.3%)	3.04	1.1494
	Processes that involve students in policy formulation embrace their voices	252	26 (10.3%)	40 (15.9%)	47 (18.7%)	119 (47.2%)	20 (7.9%)	3.44	1.1031
State-run	Engagement of students in policy formulation demonstrate policy beneficiaries' needs	291	25 (8.6%)	55 (18.9%)	61 (21%)	126 (43.3%)	24 (8.2%)	3.17	1.0966
	Processes that involve students in policy formulation embrace their voices	291	25 (8.6%)	56 (19.2%)	62(21.3%)	114 (39.2%)	34 (11.7%)	3.16	1.1286

**Key:** N= Number of sample participants; Criterion Mean (CM) =3 and above indicate that formulation processes highly promote student friendly environments in this study; Standard Deviation (SD) measures the decision dispersion from the mean score in the study.

According to results in Table 5, on the item on whether college-based policy formulation processes that engage students demonstrate the beneficiaries' needs, in the church-run teachers' college, those who agreed were 42.5% and those who strongly agreed were 8.3% with a mean score of 3.04 and SD of 1.1494. In state-run teachers' college, those who agreed were 43.3% and those who strongly agreed were 8.2% with a mean score of 3.17 and SD 1.0966. The results indicated that the student teachers were fairly high in agreement with the assertion that engaging student teachers during policy formulation incorporates the students' needs, and that this enhances the promotion of student friendly environments.

Results in Table 5, on the item on whether formulation polices involve student teachers and embrace their voices, indicate that in the church-run teachers' college, participants who agreed were 47.2%, while those who strongly agreed were 7.9% with a mean score of 3.44 and SD of 1.1038. In the state-run teachers' college, those who agreed were 39.2%, strongly agreed were 11.7%, with a mean score of 3.16 and SD of 1.1286.

The results indicate that the involvement of the student teachers was fairly high, implying that their involvement embraces students' input and enhances the promotion of student friendly environments.

## b) Strategies that Enhance Policy Formulation Processes in Teachers' Colleges to Promote Student Friendly Environments

**Table 6:** Responses on strategies that enhance policy formulation processes in teachers' colleges to promote student friendly environments

Responses on strategies that enhances policy formulation for the promotion of student friendly environments	
Church-run	State-run
FG1SrcM7: "In my view policy formulation processes should involve the clients." FG1CAB1: "Our college policy formulation processes should directly involve the student body in order to promote friendly environments." P1: "There should be a friendly policy decision making structure that engages the SRC members and the student body" FG1SrcM4: "I suggest the formulation process should be from bottom to top, involving every stakeholder than top-down as it were."	P2: "Yes, we can improve the formulation process by having wide consultation, involving all stakeholders at all stages." FG2Src3: "We need to be directly involved at all stages of policy formulation in a transparent manner". FG2Src2: "As SRC we feel the formulators should consult the students to get first-hand information in order to come up with user-friendly policies." FG2CAB5: "We can enhance the promotion of student friendly environments by decentralizing the formulation processes."

**Key:** FG2CAB1 = Focus Group 2 College Academic Board FG2SrcM= Focus Group 2 Student Representative Council member P2 = Principal of TEC B; FG1CAB1 = Focus Group 1 College Academic Board FG1SrcM= Focus Group 1 Student Representative Council member

Results in Table 6, show that the church-run teachers' college participants, FG1Src7 and FG1CAB1 concurred with FG2SrcM3 in the state-run teachers' college that formulation processes should involve student teachers in order to enhance the promotion of student friendly environments. Further, P1, P2 and FG1SrcM4 echoed that involvement of student teachers enhances the policy formulation processes in order to promote student friendly environments.

Overall, both quantitative and qualitative results showed that involvement of student teachers enhances the policy formulation processes to promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges.

### 5. Discussion of Findings

The study findings, from both teachers' colleges, established that there were five key stakeholders who were involved in the college-based policy formulation processes, the procedure followed four stages and that the involvement of student body was fairly low. How these two teachers' colleges formulated their policies, the roles of key stakeholders and involvement of the student body, in an effort to promote student friendly environments are discussed in this section.

#### 5.1. Key Stakeholders Involved in Policy Formulation in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe

The study revealed that there are five key stakeholders involved in the formulation of college-based policies in an effort to promote student friendly environments as discussed below.

- i). First, results established that the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Development is a key stakeholder which provides policy frameworks that guide teachers' colleges on how they should embrace students' needs in order to promote socially, physically and academically student friendly environments.
- ii). Secondly, the principals are key stakeholders who are responsible for carrying out policy consultations, convening meetings related to policy formulation and chairing CAB policy ratification meetings. The findings confirm earlier studies by Owolabi (2016) [17], and Nwangwa (2016) [15], who assert that principals are chief executive officers in teachers' colleges, responsible for policy formulation and implementation, in order to create student friendly environments.
- iii). Thirdly, the College Academic Board is the supreme board in teachers' colleges, that ratifies college-based

policies in a manner that influences the promotion of student friendly environments.

- iv). Fourthly, the advisory council has the responsibility to advise and moderate college policies, in order to facilitate the promotion of socially, academically and physically friendly student environments. It was also established that the advisory council regulated teachers' colleges policy formulation processes in line with the government's College Friendly Policy (CFP) and Inclusive Education Policy frameworks. The findings are in concurrence with the findings by Levinson, Sutton and Jian (2015) [11], who assert that, advisory council members are pivotal in the policy formulation process in the quest to promote student friendly environments in institutions of higher learning.
- v). Fifthly, results revealed that the SRC represents the student body during the college-based policy formulation process. Further, the SRC coordinates fellow students during policy consultation in order to capture the students' social, academic and physical needs in line with the promotion of student friendly environments.

#### 5.2. College-based Policy Formulation Processes in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe

The paper established four distinct interdependent college-based policy formulation stages as explained below.

- i). First, the findings revealed that the agenda setting stage was characterised by setting policy actions and making critical decisions and predictions that are intended to influence the promotion of student friendly environments. These results confirm assertions by Viennet, and Pont (2017) [26] that agenda setting refers to the genesis of policy explanations on actions intended to address public policy challenges. Thus, the college-based policy agenda setting stage, as established in this study, shows that the formulators and implementers in the two teachers' colleges were guided by the Zimbabwe government policy frameworks and policy agenda. Further, the findings showed that, agenda setting was specific to teachers' colleges' mandate to come up with college-based policy actions that addressed student teachers' needs, for the successful implementation of the student friendly colleges concept.
- ii). Second, it also emerged from the study that, during stakeholders' consultation, which is stage two (2) of the college-based policy formulation cycle, student teachers were engaged in dialogue during the principal's hour

sessions, SRC meetings with the Dean of Students, and when participating in the First Year Orientation programmes. The study established that, these college-based consultation platforms informed the college-based policy formulators of the concerns and needs of the student teachers, for their incorporation into the college-based policies during the formulation process. In this study, the findings also showed that, the involvement of student teachers during consultation was fairly low in both teachers' colleges. Further, the study showed that the correlation between the level of student teachers' involvement and the implementation effectiveness was low. Thus, the study revealed that the involvement of student teachers during stakeholder consultation was fairly low; hence the student teachers' voices and input into college-based policy formulation was minimal in the two teachers' colleges. The study established that the stakeholders' consultation stage was essential insurance for the long-term positive impact on enabling the promotion of SFEs developed on the collective informed needs of the student teachers in the teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

- iii). Thirdly, the study established that the college-based policy writing stage involved a sub-committee from the college-based policy formulators, which puts together opinions and ideas on record, taking into account stakeholders' input, and blending them with the government policy frameworks to come up with college-based policy drafts that were later presented to CAB for ratification. The study confirmed earlier studies by Lawrence and Lorch (2015) <sup>[10]</sup> that the writing of college-based policies is a critical stage in that, stakeholders' policy opinions and ideas are written as college-based policy statements. This study also established that, the SRC members were not involved in the writing of the college-based policies. However, research shows that it is fundamental to engage the clients in college-based policy writing through their representatives, as well as to consult legal experts in order to come up with policy documents that can legally compete successfully in the promotion of SFEs (Anderson, 2013; Bouchier, 2015) <sup>[1, 5]</sup>. In the same vein, this study showed that the collective writing of college-based policies embraced fundamental policy ingredients that included technical wording, accuracy, precision and clarity-strengthening during the formulation process.
- iv). Fourthly, study findings in church-run and state-run teachers' colleges showed that CAB members had the responsibility to deliberate on and ratify presented college-based policy drafts. The study also indicated that, the ratification stage was characterised by the reading of college-based policy draft item by item, discussion of the items while making adjustments where necessary, and compiling the final draft. The study further established that in both teachers' colleges, there was no SRC representation at the ratification stage. In line with what other public policy researchers revealed, this study showed that policy ratification is a critical stage in which all key stakeholders should be taken on board, in order to maximise the achievement of policy objectives during implementation (Lawrence, and Lorsch, 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>. Thus, the study demonstrated that student teachers were not directly involved at this critical stage of the college-based policy formulation procedure, hence constraining the

college-based policy outcomes intended to promote student friendly environments.

### 5.3. Students' Level of Involvement during the College-Based Policy Formulation Process in Teachers' Colleges in Zimbabwe

The calculated mean score results showed that, the student teachers were lowly involved during the college-based policy formulation process. Furthermore, the study established that the low involvement of the student teachers' structures implied that there were gaps between college-based policy beneficiaries and formulators, thereby constraining the policy formulation process.

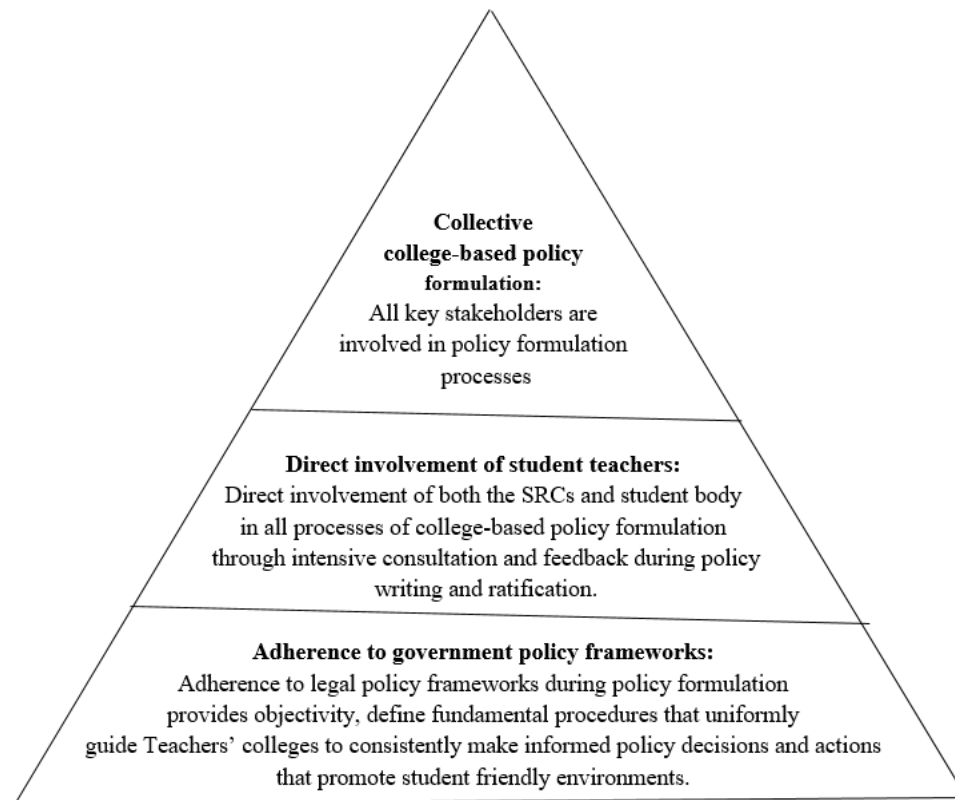
The study's results confirmed earlier findings from a study on "*Policy formulation process that creates a conducive physical environment for the tertiary learner*", carried out by Walker (2013) <sup>[28]</sup>, which suggested that, if the policy formulation process does not involve the key stakeholders, the procedure may not prepare friendly environments for effective policy implementation. In the same vein, this study established that the effective involvement of the student teachers during the college-based policy formulation process had a significant effect on the promotion of student friendly environments. Thus, the study findings were in agreement with earlier studies by UNICEF (2010) <sup>[25]</sup>; Wali (2011) <sup>[27]</sup>; Yang and Raul (2014) <sup>[29]</sup>, and Miller and Cunningham (2017), which established that, it is fundamental to involve clients during the policy formulation process in order to promote mutual understanding, allow collective policy support, have a common policy vision and instil a sense of college-based policy ownership that enhances the promotion of SFEs.

### 5.4 Policy Formulation Processes that Enhance the Promotion of Student Friendly Environments

It emerged from the study that, to a great extent, adherence to government policy frameworks during college-based policy formulation process, enhanced high compliance and conformity to SFEs standards. Further, the study results showed that adherence to the provisions of government policy frameworks was critical in that it enabled transparency, collective policy ownership and policy compliance. These results confirm assertions by Selle (2014) <sup>[21]</sup>; Spencer (2015) <sup>[22]</sup> and Owolabi (2016) <sup>[17]</sup>, that adherence to legal government policy frameworks during policy formulation provided objectivity that enhanced the promotion of student friendly environments. Thus, the study established that adherence to government policy frameworks was a critical antecedent to the promotion of student friendly environments in teachers' colleges.

The quantitative results showed that, the involvement of student teachers during policy formulation had high effectiveness on the promotion of student friendly environments. The results further established that, involvement of student teachers in the policy formulation processes that included agenda setting, stakeholder consultation, policy writing and ratification enhanced transparency, policy awareness levels and policy compliance that effectively promoted student friendly environments. There is resonance between the current study and Bouchier (2015) <sup>[5]</sup> and Owolabi (2016) <sup>[17]</sup> study findings, which note that the involvement of key stakeholders accommodates the diversity of input and interests thereby influencing the promotion of student friendly environments.





**Fig 1:** The college-based policy formulation pyramid model

Figure 6.1 above illustrates the college-based policy formulation pyramid model with variables that enhance the promotion of student friendly environment anchoring on: adhering to government policy frameworks, directly involving the student teachers and making policy formulation decisions collectively.

## 6. Conclusions

The following were the conclusions of the study:

- i). The study concluded that there are five key stakeholders in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, which are; the government, principals, CAB members, SRC members and advisory council members, who are involved in college-based policy formulation processes.
- ii). It also concluded that, college-based policy formulation processes that promote student friendly environments in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, were anchored on four interdependent stages, which are; the agenda setting, stakeholder consultation, policy writing and ratification.
- iii). It was also established that the concept of involving student teachers during the formulation process occupies a fundamental position as it grounds significant potential to effectively promote student friendly environments. Thus, the study concluded that the involvement of the student body and SRC structures during college-based policy formulation processes has the potential to promote socially, physically and academically student friendly environments in teachers' colleges. Based on these conclusions, the college-based policy formulation pyramid model was developed as summarised diagrammatically on Figure 6.1 above.

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